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Kingsley Martin on Bertrand Russell

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Alpine Centenary

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Wine Supplement

Comments on the Week's News .. 594
The Future of Penal Policy 597
The Chancellor's False Trail. Thomas Balogh 597
London Diary. Critic 598
This England 599
Saving the Lords. Reginald Reynolds .. 599
Mao in Moscow. Lois Mitchison .. 599
A Hundred Years of Mountains. Janet Adam Smith 600
Fleet Street Notebook. Francis Williams 602

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Cautious Critics. Francis Newton 604
Giving Pleasure. David Sylvester .. 604
Wexford Gaiety. Desmond Shawe-Taylor 606
René Clair Again. William Whitebait .. 606
Caps On, Eggheads! Tom Driberg .. 607

WINE SUPPLEMENT

Restoring a Vineyard. Ronald Barton 609
Burgundy or Bordeaux? Edmund Penning-Rowsell 610
A Wine Diary. Post-Phylloxera .. 612
German Wines. Alfred Langenbach 614
Vintners' Choice? Peter Luke 615

CORRESPONDENCE

Earl Russell OM, Trevor Huddleston CR, Sir Stephen King-Hall, Frank Beswick MP, Arnold Ross, F. W. Gilder, R. L. C. Foottit, Robert A. Sandow, David Ennals, A. W. Thomas, J. P. O'Connor, Marcel Péju, Benjamin Carr 617

Books in General: The Faith of Bertrand Russell. Kingsley Martin 619
The Two of You. James Reeves 620

REVIEWS

Little Old Blitz. G. W. Stonier 620
Hale and Hearty. John Jones 620
Old Land, New Face. Eric Shipton .. 621
Counterblast. R. H. S. Crossman .. 622
New Novels. Walter Allen 623
Does Not an Arab Bleed? John Freeman 624
Gramophone Records. Peter Heyworth 626
Week-end Competition 627
City Lights. Taurus 628
The Chess Board. Assiac 628
Week-end Crossword. Set-square .. 630

Science Fiction and Science Facts

MANY young people in the West, long accustomed to take space travel for granted, are excited, but not surprised by Russia's success in despatching a dog to engirdle the earth. To them it will not seem fantastic if the Soviet Union celebrates its 40th birthday by shooting the moon. Since everyone likes his own team to be first, it will be humiliating if the first lunar hit paints the moon with a red flag instead of the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes. But that will merely be an incentive in the competition to reach Mars or Venus – no longer a matter of science fiction, but already under public and technical discussion in Russia.

This is a rivalry that the more intelligent of the younger generation everywhere understands. It knows that science itself is not a national affair, that the USSR, now a long leap ahead, has built on western foundations and that the West will soon catch up if it abandons its departmental and national squabbles. In this age anything is possible, even if nothing is likely. Some people believe that these strange and apparently credibly reported manifestations – flying saucers and other unidentified objects – may really come from outer space. If we are about to invade other planets, is it impossible that we may be similarly invaded, even though we do not now know of a planet from which this is possible? Granted that all this is fanciful, it remains stuff to fire the imagination. It symbolises the challenge to this generation to switch emotionally from rivalry between the nations to the infinite possibilities of outer space. The sputniks open a new chapter in mankind's mastery of matter; can we really be foolish enough to treat them merely as another stage in the cold war?

Only two years ago Mr Krushchev told us in London that we were still regarding Russians as a backward peasant people; he warned us that we should soon know better. He has certainly made his word good. The result is to produce, especially in America, alarm, almost panic. More money is to be found for a crash programme to produce intercontinental missiles; there is to be still wider application for the security measures which do not seem to have aided American science and which, it is to be feared, may be imposed on British science as a price of sharing 'secrets' which, clearly, are already well known to the Russians. Most alarming of all, it is apparently proposed to release West Germany from its treaty restriction against nuclear rearmament. This would seem the very recipe for starting a third world war. Why should we expect Russia to allow Germany, which devastated its country only 15 years ago, to be rearmed with nuclear weapons?

Since it is now indeed impossible to use war as an instrument of policy it would be the extreme of folly to use Russia's lead in intercontinental missiles to start a new 'red scare'. We need a cool appraisal of our danger and a youthful capacity to face an enigmatic future. If war was too dangerous to contemplate last week, it is even more suicidal this week. All we get from our statesmen and most of our newspapers is a stereotyped reaction by old men whose minds run in grooves. It is frightening to hear Mr. Dulles and Mr Macmillan mouthing phrases that were all too familiar and unrealistic ten years ago. Surely the first thing to understand is that western policy all these years has been based on an assumption of western superiority and it is now certainly out of date. We have literally no other choice than co-existence or destruction. Hitherto the West has always assumed that it was we who negotiated from strength, with the result that the Russians have enjoyed calling our bluff. Today, if this pretence is abandoned, we are more likely to make sense of future negotiations.

None of the prophecies for the last 20 years is so apt today as H. G. Wells' *Shape Of Things To Come*. His dates, of course, were wrong; 1957, in his picture, shows half the population of the world dead from disease after the final war. The disease he describes is not radioactive poisoning, but not dissimilar. The world in his prophecy is at last unified by scientists; and a great debate follows about whether young people should be allowed to risk their lives by flying to the moon. Today we know that they will certainly do so; in Russia they are said to be already volunteering. The question remains whether we must also fulfil the first part of the prophecy by killing half the world.

Comments on the Week's News

From Vacuum to Immobility

When Bourgès-Maunoury's government collapsed, writes our Paris Correspondent, the last thing his Finance Minister, Félix Gaillard, expected was to succeed him as premier. This cautious economic technician, who had prudently steered his way through the crisis in the Radical Party without once taking up a position for or against Mendès-France, had made a great many enemies during the summer by his budgetary economies. The Socialists criticised him for his cuts in welfare credits; the Right denounced his economic *dirigisme*. Indeed, Gaillard's policies were one of the main underlying causes of the crisis. However, after 36 days, he has not only been invested as premier, but has persuaded his critics on both sides of the Assembly to sit in his Cabinet. A miracle? On the contrary, a perfectly logical consequence of the 'parliamentary mechanism', which is based on two principles: (1) a ministerial crisis cannot be prolonged indefinitely, because of the increasing risk that the anti-parliamentary parties will be brought into the negotiations; (2) after each of the two main republican groups has attempted, without success, to form a government based on its own principles, both Right and Left must, when the danger point is reached, decide that their object is no longer to put across their own programme, but to prevent their enemies from forming a government from which they are excluded; the best way of doing this is, of course, to participate in whatever government is formed. Hence, the Socialists and the Right, having abused each other for over a month, agreed last week-end to sit together in the same Cabinet. Obviously, the new government, composed of self-cancelling elements, will carry out the policies of neither; its characteristic will be immobility and its principal object simply to survive. The only welcome result of the crisis is the erosion of the power of M. Mollet among his own party. The Socialist National Council approved participation in the new government by a mere 3 per cent majority, and after a violent debate; and M. Mollet has now found it necessary to announce that he will undertake a tour of the federations to 'explain' his position.

Another Summit in Sight?

The Soviet withdrawal from the UN Disarmament Sub-committee is the logical consequence of their recent request that all member nations should in future take part in the discussions. The sub-committee was formed in 1954 on two assumptions: (1) that the disagreement on the principles of disarmament which existed between the two blocs could, to some extent at least, be narrowed by discussing technical problems in private; and (2) that such discussions could most effectively be carried on by confining them to the five powers which already possessed a potential or actual nuclear capacity. For some time it seemed possible that these assumptions might prove correct, and during the last 18 months, which saw a series of important Soviet concessions, there was real progress on specific issues. In July, however, the Soviet attitude abruptly changed, and since then it has become increasingly obvious that their desire to reach a limited agreement – which at one time seemed genuine – has totally evaporated. Indeed, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the waning Soviet interest in negotiated disarmament is a direct consequence of their growing consciousness of superiority in advanced weapons research. Looking back on the negotiations, it is possible to detect a central thread which runs through all their varying phases: the precise and intimate relationship between successive Soviet proposals and their changing estimate of the world balance of military power. To state this is not to imply that at no time was Russia willing to come to an agreement; on the contrary, had the West seriously attempted to negotiate on the basis of the Soviet proposals of May, 1955, which were substantially the same as those put forward earlier by Britain and France, it is very likely that a limited agreement would have been reached. But the opportunity was missed and is unlikely to occur again. The form of the current Soviet move seems to be guided partly by the desire to appease the uncommitted nations – India has already tabled a proposal that other nations be included in the talks – but more so by the search for a further 'summit' meeting, which Krushchev has now proposed in his 'peace' speech on Wednesday. Once disarmament has been effectively removed from its UN context, the case for a summit conference is correspondingly strengthened.

The Attack on the Unions

By rejecting the Whitley award for lower-paid Health Service employees the government has made agreement with the unions impossible. This foolish decision, in fact, has given the industrial unions a wide range of new allies – ranging from the Local Government Officers to the BMA – who are rightly outraged by this unprecedented breach with long-established practice. If a negotiated award is to be jettisoned at the whim of the Chancellor, the whole system of collective bargaining in the public service is threatened: the unions concerned, and they are among the most moderate, may have no option but to turn towards direct action because the door to negotiation and arbitration has been slammed in their faces. The damage to labour relations in the public service is bad enough in itself; but the implications of Mr Walker-Smith's blunt repudiation of a wage settlement – coming after Mr Thorneycroft's advance decision to block any increase in railway pay – are extremely serious. The government will not merely encourage employers to reject wage claims: it has set them the crudest possible example. The unions have been told bluntly that any future demands will be resisted all the way. The government has been driven to this desperate course, which may lead to widespread industrial trouble in the next few months, by its failure to understand the real cause of the price inflation and – as Dr Balogh shows on a later page – its consequent conviction that the bargaining position of the unions must be weakened. This failure, to which must be added its misreading of gold and dollar losses this year, could be disastrous: it is leading both to a showdown with the unions and to the risk of a sizeable recession.

NEXT WEEK

Children's Books

A Pre-Christmas Supplement for Parents and Present-Givers

The Limits of Tapping

That there is some value in the recommendations of the committee of privy councillors on telephone-tapping is obvious: any limitation on the secret power of officialdom to interfere with individual liberty is worth while, and the new safeguards proposed do have the effect of erecting further ministerial – and therefore potentially public – hurdles which must be cleared before officials can get authority to proceed with their dirty work. Even on the assumptions of the majority of the committee, however, the recommendations do not go far enough. There is still an uncomfortable looseness in the definition of 'serious crime', still a tendency to accept that a police-suspect has fewer rights than the rest of the community, and still a refusal to recommend the annual publication of the total number of intercepts – a refusal which is incomprehensible now that the committee itself has published the figures for each year from 1937 to 1956. The more fundamental criticism of the majority report is its assumption that secret service work can be susceptible to effective parliamentary control. The short point is that these operations are secret: parliament does not scrutinise the vote which finances them: no minister will accept questions on them; and when members do from time to time succeed in penetrating a minister's defences with a pertinent question, a ministerial untruth is not unknown. Nor is that all. It may be doubted whether the security police find it necessary to refer all their actions to high authority – and it is easy to imagine Home Secretaries who would be largely excluded by official conspiracy from this highly secret branch of security. Mr Gordon Walker, the minority member of the committee, may have this sort of consideration in mind when he suggests that no warrant should be issued except on a sworn information or affidavit, and that no material obtained should be used by the Crown as evidence in any court of law or public inquiry. The latter would be perhaps the most effective of all safeguards; and, though it might increase the work of collecting evidence, it could hardly hinder the prevention, or even the detection, of crime.

Zhukhov's Demotion

The official reasons given for the expulsion of Marshal Zhukhov from the Presidium and the Central Committee may bear little relation to the real reasons why, on the eve of the revolutionary celebrations, he was suddenly removed from the leadership. But they contain two important clues. The first is that the explanation is put in terms intelligible to the party membership, rather than to the Soviet public. In order to justify the sacking of the leading spokesman of the army, Krushchev has had once again to reassert the supremacy of the party and to use its formal machinery for disciplining a member of the ruling group. The second is that Zhukhov's removal is a sign that the armed forces are not to be permitted an 'independent' role in Soviet politics. Krushchev has thus succeeded in elevating the party at the expense of the other main 'empires' in Soviet society – the secret police, the all-Union bureaucracy and the army. But it remains so far a precarious victory: each of these groups still exists, each preserves its apparatus, each retains some kind of power.

He has played one against the other, and the possibility that any two of them may combine against him remains. To cope with this threat, and to build up his own machine within the party, Krushchev has been forced to fall back upon 'Leninist' practices and attitudes. And this means that his successes have been achieved, not so much by personal *diktat*, as by revitalising the party organisation. Now that the 'empires' have been brought under some kind of control, Krushchev has somewhat more room to manœuvre than he has had at any time since Stalin's death. We shall now see what use he makes of this opportunity.

Labour's Chance on Central Africa

The biggest colonial problem to face the next Labour government will almost certainly be that in Central Africa. The party has both an opportunity and a duty to start the battle now, even if it has to wait two years before forming a government. During the debates on federation between 1951 and 1953 great stress was laid by the Conservatives on the protection afforded to African interests by the creation of the African Affairs Board. This board was set up in order to refer any discriminatory legislation to Whitehall and Westminster. It took action for the first time a few weeks ago by drawing attention to the discriminatory nature of the proposed changes in the federal constitution. The significance of these changes is not that membership of the federal house will be increased from 35 to 59, but that the way is cleared for European voters to control the elections of eight of the 12 African members. Genuine African opinion, already represented by only four of the present 35 members, would thus sink to a still more minute level. The only practical result of Lord Home's visit to the Federation appears to be that he has accepted the case of the federal government against the African Affairs Board and has turned down the latter's complaint. However, the draft Order in Council has to lie before the House for 40 days. This presents the opposition with their opportunity to make public protest against a shocking act of discrimination.

Oligarchy in the Bahamas

The American tourist-dominated Bahamian islands present the most Gilbertian picture in the colonial empire. A deputation from the majority section of the elected members of the House of Assembly is at present in London trying to persuade the Colonial Office to agree that they should have more responsibility in government. This is in line with the general constitutional development in the West Indies. Nevertheless, it is opposed by all progressive forces in the islands, who have jointly sent a representative to argue against the delegation's case. The trouble is the absence of any genuine democracy in Bahamian elections. Franchise is based on property, allowing both plural and company voting, and being confined to males alone. In a recent by-election, for instance, one man cast 138 votes. As a consequence, the majority of members are elected by the business community, which uses its political power for its own commercial ends. The progressive forces, led by the Progressive Liberal Party, demand adult suffrage. Yet the Colonial Office cannot itself grant this request because constitutional power lies in the hands of this businessmen's Assembly. A similar situation over the issue of a secret ballot arose in 1948, when the Secretary of State, Arthur Creech Jones, managed to bully the Assembly into accepting secret voting against its will. In the present case the opposition from the Assembly would be much stronger, but if democracy is ever to come to this island people, the strongest pressure must be applied from London.

News from Our Own Correspondents

Athens

The 'Brighton Declaration'

Paul Johnson writes: The overwhelming impression I received in Athens last week-end is that everybody there is now placing all hopes for a Cyprus settlement on the Labour Party. The replacement of Harding by Sir Hugh Foot, though welcome, is regarded as very secondary to Barbara Castle's unequivocable statement at the Brighton conference, that Labour stands by self-determination and will 'endeavour to complete this freedom operation during the lifetime of the next Labour government'. Mrs Castle's statement, indeed, is now referred to as 'the Brighton Declaration', and Greeks and Cypriots alike regard it as definitely and irrevocably committing Labour on the Cyprus issue. I got the feeling, moreover, that the statement was received with considerable relief, as well as satisfaction. Few people in Athens believe that Sir Hugh Foot's arrival in Nicosia, though it may well reduce tension further, will lead to successful negotiations so long as the Tories remain in office. But the Brighton Declaration has convinced everyone that a limit has now been set to the period of waiting, and thus removed the primary cause of violence. Provided the British government does not attempt to sabotage it, and provided Labour sticks to its guns in the meantime, there is no reason why the present truce should not last until the next election. As a Greek MP said to me: 'Now that we have a firm promise, we are willing to wait'.

The second proviso is by far the more important. When I arrived in Athens I found that confidence in the validity of the Brighton Declaration has been somewhat shaken by a mischievous statement, made over Cyprus radio, by that ambulatory weathervane, Mr Desmond Donnelly MP. It was not difficult to enlighten the Greeks as to the nature of Mr Donnelly's standing in the party. Indeed, over the week-end both Ian Mikardo and Fenner Brockway publicly affirmed that Mrs Castle's promise was official Labour policy. Nevertheless, Donnelly's word did considerable damage if only because they seemed to confirm the impression which it has been the constant endeavour of both the Cyprus administration and the Tories to put across: that, despite statements to the contrary, there is no real difference between Tory and Labour policy. It has, therefore, become doubly important that Labour leaders, in their public utterances, should say nothing which implies a retreat from the Brighton position. It is no secret that some of them – and notably Mr James Callaghan – believe that it ties the hands of the next Labour government far too closely; and they are impressed by the government's argument that, by adopting such a policy, Labour has ruined the effect of the Foot appointment, made negotiations during the next two years impossible, and thus invited a return to violence. In fact, this is the exact reverse of the truth. Sir Hugh Foot's presence will make it less difficult for Cypriots to maintain the truce until Labour's return to power; and, correspondingly, Labour's promise will make his task far easier. But if, on the other hand, any Labour spokesman undermines the confidence of the Cypriots in the party's intentions, then terrorism will follow as night follows day.

Britain & the Nuclear Bombs

In response to readers' demands, J. B. Priestley's article in last week's NEW STATESMAN *has been reprinted in leaflet form. Copies are available from the Publisher, 10 Great Turnstile, London WC1 (HOL 8471) at these bulk rates (post free): 100 for 25s., 50 for 13s., 12 for 3s. 6d.*

Washington

Invisible Men

President Eisenhower's rapidly changing 'team' refutes that old axiom of American politics that the less forceful the chief executive, the stronger his Cabinet. Of the ten original members, six have now departed, and the net result is a Cabinet headed by quiet unknowns, except, of course, for the durable and ubiquitous Mr Dulles. George Humphrey, Charles E. Wilson, and Herbert Brownell, while hardly the stuff of history, were policy makers, free-swinging, tactless, and happy to do battle. Their successors in the Departments of the Treasury, Defence, and Justice respectively, are cool, flexible young men of the managerial class – anonymous, efficient, and without any demonstrated itch to lead even a President who is not adverse to being led.

At the Treasury Robert B. Anderson, former president of a holding company for mining operations, plans to carry on in the Humphrey tradition of fighting inflation with the most orthodox weapons known to government finance. He shudders at budget deficits and is second to none in his praise of the sound dollar. But where Humphrey would lash out at the spenders, in defence as well as anywhere else, Anderson speaks softly and strikes a wordy platitude. On the one hand, he says, let's have economy by all means, but, on the other hand, nothing 'inimical to the adequate defence posture of this country and its allies'. The President will probably not have to say of him, as he said of Humphrey, that one could always persuade him but not 'keep him persuaded'.

Supplanting Charles E. Wilson, a hearty anachronism who enjoyed his own *gaffes* and was always good copy, is Neil McElroy, a man who rose through advertising and promotion to the presidency of Proctor & Gamble – soap and the soft sell, in place of the rugged tycoon. One of the first to see and exploit the possibilities of radio soap operas, McElroy is satisfied with his handiwork 'They work,' he says. 'They sell soap.' It will now be one of the new Defence Secretary's functions to soft-soap Congress into making higher appropriations for pure scientific research, an aspect of national defence where he fortunately differs somewhat from his predecessor. Three years ago Wilson was asked at a press conference for some word on what progress the Defence Department had made with earth satellites. 'I have enough problems on earth,' Wilson replied.

As for the Russians, he didn't care what they were doing about the conquest of outer space. 'I would rather they go off to the moon or some other place than come over here.' In contrast to an auto magnate's scorn for such dreamy stuff, McElroy is all for a 'pretty speculative, innovational kind of research, rather than strictly development.'

At 44, William P. Rogers steps into the Attorney General's office vacated by Mr Brownell, but where Brownell, like Humphrey and Wilson, influenced the Administration in areas far beyond their own departments, there is no reason to believe that Rogers will play any such role. Brownell was the politician of the Cabinet, close to Dewey and spokesman for the financially powerful eastern sector of the Republican Party. Rogers, too, is a product of the Dewey school, but rather than a power in his own right he is Vice-President Nixon's man. As such he is expected to carry on Brownell's tough policy toward the South, a vital ingredient of Nixon's drive towards the Presidency, but to operate more smoothly than his predecessor. Even northern Democrats found it hard to go along on civil rights with the man who had all but accused Harry Truman of treason, whereas Rogers, primarily a technician, has friends in both parties on Capitol Hill.

With the Cabinet's influence generally weakened, however, by the successive departures of strong personalities, and with the President no more than ever inclined to take a bold lead, Nixon finds himself in a position unique for a Vice-President. He has already changed his office from 'a spare tyre on the automobile of government,' as one of its former occupants put it, to a focal point of political power.

ROBERT BENDINER

Westminster

Flesh, Fowl or Old Red Herring?

Just for one moment, the Prime Minister managed to stir the enthusiasm of his supporters. That was when he marched boldly up to Mr Aneurin Bevan's front door and rang the bell, knowing all the time that the occupant was away. Otherwise the main interest in the 63-minute speech with which he launched himself upon the new session of parliament was to see whether he would break Ramsay MacDonald's long-standing record for the number of clichés. He just failed.

Surprisingly, but not unusually, the rest of the opening debate was rather flat. Even the anger of those who speak for health service workers and the railwaymen was not yet quite at the boil; and in the corridors members for the moment seemed less concerned with the government's proposals for reforming local government, including the substitution of block for percentage grants, than they were with talk of House of Lords reform.

Only a few people in the country now have real respect for the House of Lords as at present constituted; and if the Lords, stuffed as it is with hereditary peers, were ever seriously to check the legislation of some future Labour government, public opinion might demand its complete abolition. But if a few selected women and a few more men, selected for their brains instead of for their blue blood, could be infused into it, the place would seem more respectable; and, since both the powers and predominant political complexion of the Lords would remain unchanged, the Conservative party would have a better chance of continuing to govern, even when out of office. This may well be a reason why the government has brought out its proposals now. Lord Hailsham, the Conservative reply to Sputnik II, may believe that the government will win the next election; but others, who sometimes come in contact with the earth's atmosphere, are doubtful. Lords reform is their insurance. It is, further, both a splendid red herring with which to divert the opposition from more serious matters and a contentious bone calculated to set one Labour dog snarling at another. For on the future of the Lords the Parliamentary Labour Party is considerably divided.

There are those who want to abolish the place altogether either by direct legislation or by leaving it alone so that its ludicrous composition may bring it into increasing contempt and final disuse as the years pass. Something of this feeling was expressed during the debate by Miss Jennie Lee. There are others who have no strong views one way or another about the Lords, but who feel that the electorate would be unable to understand why the progressive Labour party should wish to oppose such seemingly progressive measures as the admission of women and the creation of life peers. The most they would want their party to do would be to abstain when the government's proposals come to the vote, and some would probably favour voting for them. There are still others who want a completely reformed second chamber and these are themselves split into two groups. Both want the hereditary principle replaced by some form of election; but one group wants an elected second chamber, which would be shorn of all power and which would only recommend and advise; while the other group wants a second chamber which, when elected, would have much the same powers as the present House.

If the Labour Party were now in power and had decided to tackle Lords reform, Mr Hugh Gaitskell would probably have comparatively little difficulty in bringing these varying groups together. He would probably propose the abolition of the hereditary principle – he condemned it in the Commons this week, just as last week Lord Alexander condemned it in the Lords. He would probably propose that members of the Lords should be elected – he specifically stated this week that members of any second chamber should be elected in the same way as members of the House of Commons – or he might even adopt the ideas put forward by Lord Pakenham who suggests that only elected peers should be allowed to vote. Both proposals would ensure that the effective majority in the Lords was pulling the same way as the effective majority in the Commons. Mr Gaitskell has already said that the present power to delay legislation for a year is unjustifiable; he would, therefore, presumably propose a considerable reduction. Such proposals, I think, would go far to achieve unity.

But Labour is not in power. Gaitskell cannot present the House or his party with a complete set of proposals. He and his colleagues have to make up their minds in the next few weeks whether they will oppose proposals which leave the Lords' powers and effective political composition unchanged while increasing their moral authority, or whether they will let the present proposals through without protest, reserving their position on major reform until they are returned to power. Mr Gaitskell's own view may well be for outright reform or nothing, which would mean opposing the present proposals; but, pulling at his coat-tails, are a number of elder statesmen as well as the small minority who spend agreeable hours in front of a mirror addressing themselves as 'My Lord'. So for the moment, his line appears to be that the proposals are too trivial – tinkering with the problem, he called them – for any of us to worry about too much, one way or another.

J. P. W. MALLALIEU

The Future of Penal Policy

THE Home Secretary's speech to the Howard League has thrown a bridge over the gulf dividing the practicable from the theoretical in penal reform. Time will be needed to coax the diehards across it (and public opinion with them); but much less time than any of Mr Butler's recent predecessors would have assumed. 'If we were to consider in the abstract,' said Mr Butler, 'what would be the best instrument for straightening out the crooked lives and minds of the endless varieties of human failure who pass through our criminal courts, it is unlikely that the prison would strike us as the right answer.'

The prolonged impasse in the field of penology has had two main causes: first, that no one has been able to suggest a practicable alternative to prison, and, secondly, that all real progress has been waiting upon the belief that somehow someone would do something really radical about it. This waiting process, Mr Butler explained, has now got us back to the position of a year or two ago, with 3,000 men sleeping three to a cell. By the standards we are now trying to establish in the central and training prisons, conditions in the local ones are a disgrace. Yet it is in the local prisons that most prisoners serve their entire sentences, and all serve at least a part. The two obvious ways of reducing the prison population are to send less people there, and then to persuade those who are released not to come back. Mr Butler's programme aims at both targets.

How does he propose to lessen recidivism? First he hopes to find new prison employments – with, at long last, an Industrial Adviser helping the Prison Commission, and with a more cordial promise of trade union sympathy. He proposes to start specialist training for prison staffs and university courses in social case-work for assistant governors. He favours an extension of the Bristol 'hostel scheme', under which prisoners working in civil employment in the town come back to the prison at night – a system which is obviously 'paying good dividends' and shows, in spite of denials, that it is possible to work out a rate-for-the-job system of prison earnings. If Mr Butler carries through this last reform, which could enable a prisoner to maintain himself, keep his National Insurance cards stamped, and help to keep his relatives, he will have confounded several generations of gloomy prophets. The same is true of Mr Butler's announcement about future research and, in particular, about the Howard League's proposal for the creation of an Institute of Criminology. This, as the Home Secretary said, is a field in which there is a manifest need for 'the help and urge of the informed but detached public opinion which the universities are so well able to produce'.

It was in his reference to 'sentencing policy', however, that Mr Butler's criticism was most pointed. He wants to ensure that the courts are 'provided with all the information they require to assist them in selecting the sentence appropriate to each particular offender'. Sometimes, it seems, they are deprived of this because the prisoners on trial have been given bail; the prison authorities are therefore unable to tell the courts anything about whether the prisoner should receive 'corrective training' or Borstal treatment. Does that mean that more people ought to go to prison on remand? No: most of the courts sit too infrequently, and many of the remands would be unconscionably long.

Many courts, in fact, have no 'sentencing policy'. The Home Secretary, who has no authority to tell the courts outright what they should do, has chosen an apt occasion to direct their thoughts to the real roots of the prison problem.

The Chancellor's False Trail

THE battle lines over economic policy have now been drawn. The Chancellor and his colleagues here, President Eisenhower and Mr Martin, the Head of the Federal Reserve System in the US, have reaffirmed their belief that the stability of the West is menaced by the threat of continued inflation and agree that this threat is due entirely to 'overloading of the economy', to 'too much money chasing after too few goods'. Once this excess is eliminated by cutting demand through the indirect influence of tight money – in the main acting on investment – all will be well.

It is only in the last month or so that the blame for inflation has been shifted to the trade unions. Until recently Professor Lionel Robbins was insisting that the cause of wage increases was not the strong bargaining position of the unions under full employment but the employers' demand for labour. This may seem a trivial distinction of emphasis. But it is actually of great importance. For on the choice of reasons depends the policy for dealing with the continuous rise of domestic prices. If it is the demand for labour that is responsible, then a slight cut in demand is all that is needed. If it is the strength of the unions, then there must be at least the threat of mass unemployment.

The British and American governments are gambling on the chance that they can weaken and frighten the trade unions: the gamble may come off. Here, and in the US, the responsible (but not very expert) authorities have come to be mesmerised by the cost-of-living index, and, as I shall argue presently, they may well attain 'stability' as a result of a fall in import prices. Even so, the whole problem of 'inflation' will recur as soon as full employment and full expansion are resumed. In the meantime the western governments run a terrible risk of bankrupting the strategically vital, but economically frail, primary producing (and mostly desperately under-developed) areas where Russian influence has been growing rapidly.

Is it true that our economies are overloaded? The first obvious sign of 'overloading' an economy is a violent change in its balance of trade. Internal demand absorbs what would otherwise have been exported, and attracts more imports. Now American exports have vastly expanded. They are $1,000m. a quarter above 1956, while imports have hardly budged. Not a picture of a dangerously overloaded economy. Indeed the dollar-shortage which had been buried with such solemn rites by the orthodox economists has suddenly reappeared. The world is losing gold at the alarming rate of $2,000m. a year to the US.

But what about ourselves? Have we not lost a tremendous amount of dollars? Indeed we have. But whatever it was due to, it would be a mistake to attribute it to 'inflation' and especially demand inflation. Our exports have been rising steadily and are now in volume at least 5 per cent. above last year. Our imports have also increased – but only in proportion. We have a surplus, not a deficit, in our current balance of payments.

What is the explanation? In the main it is discreditable in the extreme. It is a tale of the laxity of the exchange control; of the perpetual desire of the Bank of England to permit virtual convertibility of sterling even for capital exports; and speculative purchases of securities by British residents in Canada and in the US. Hundreds of millions of pounds were exported, not indeed by foreigners but by British citizens, with the connivance or permission of the Bank. The swelling of the sterling balances tells the awful tale about the losses of the first half of this year, and this has not been really changed. In the last crisis, once more, it was the export of capital rather than the drawing on sterling reserves by other members of the Sterling Area or our own current deficit which played the decisive role, even if we take into account the speculative swing, the acceleration of payments for imports, and the postponement of the surrender of foreign exchange from exports. But for the export of capital by British residents the loss of gold would have been tolerable. It was the failure of exchange control which frightened the government into the 7 per cent. Bank rate.

The international picture in no way supports those who look for an explanation of our ills in a monetary over-expansion, in trying to do too much, and the domestic picture in the US and UK is even further removed from that fantasy. Both ourselves and the Americans have seen the biggest expansion of productive capacity in our history. Professor Robbins and his supporters, mesmerised by the rise in domestic prices, have been enticing the Chancellor down a completely false trail – and their counterparts in America did likewise. Far from being overloaded, productive capacity both here and in the US is not fully utilised. The dangers of the situation are plain. In the US, automobile and some heavy chemical plants are now working at little more than half of capacity, oil refinery capacity is used below 80 per cent., and steel is expected to be cut back to 75 per cent. In this country the excess productive capacity is smaller, but appreciable and growing. This is certainly not a situation in which money can be said to chase scarce goods.

In the pre-war years such combination of things would, by itself, have led to a downturn of investment. This in turn would have reduced income and consumption and thus paved the way for a cumulative shrinkage of investment, which in turn would have cut income and so on. This is precisely what happened in 1929. Since the war this fatal interaction between income, consumption and investment has not happened. A decline in consumption in 1949 and again at the end of 1953 did not evoke a corresponding fall in investment. It was durable consumption goods and stocks which proved to be the source of such instability as there was. Investment remained high even in the US, and it responded instantly to the stimulation of cheaper money. In this country investment had to be forcibly cut back, either through controls (as in 1947 and 1949) or through credit squeeze (as in 1952-3 and 1955-7), and in fact it never declined. What happened was that planned increases were postponed or cut. This remarkable stability both here and in the US was mainly, perhaps entirely, due to the confidence that 16 years of unbroken full employment built up among both employers and trade unions: both believed that a recurrence of mass-unemployment would not be tolerated. Entrepreneurs were convinced all would come right

and that failure to invest meant lost opportunities. The penalty for not investing was severe.

If stability could be explained by this fundamental confidence, so can the rise in prices. There has been constant pressure for higher wages, and in the circumstances it was not resisted. Unless productivity was rising sufficiently to offset these demands, prices were bound to rise, and only severe unemployment or the fear of severe unemployment could prevent this. Tinkering with money may smash London's international position but it cannot reverse the price trends.

This is why expansion here and in the US has well-nigh stopped, while the rise in prices has continued. In Germany, where investment had been lifted to a high level and kept there, both wages and production rose, and prices remained relatively stable. The 'liberalisation' and taxation policy of the Conservative government, which permitted an increase in consumption (especially of the better-to-do) of thousands of millions of pounds which were urgently needed to buttress our economic strength, is more responsible for our present predicament than any other factor. Real wages in England rose only 12.3 per cent. since 1950 against 24 per cent. in the US and 39 per cent. in Germany. It was high investment which enabled Germany to accomplish stability and progress. Yet our present policy is based on cutting investment rather than on finding ways to increase it.

The dangers implied in the present policy are aggravated by the deficiency of demand relative to output capacity which we have discussed. Stocks of commodities are high, and any real fright might well lead to consumers postponing their purchase of durable goods. They have been under constant attack by advertisers and their debt both here and in the US is at record height. Threats of falling income would certainly lead to a cut in consumers' demand and bring on a real setback. Nor is this all. Though the policy of monetary restriction has proved powerless to restrain domestic wage costs it has already led to a cut in commodity stocks and caused a severe fall in the price of primary goods; and, worse, the prices of Sterling Area commodities have fallen rather more than those of dollar goods, for the US, while preaching free markets, has a number of stabilisation schemes in being.

Two possible threats arise from this. The first is that the dollar earnings of the Sterling Area will decline and we shall be once more confronted with a drain on our gold reserves. The second is that our income from abroad, and the income of our best customers, will shrink when our export industries have already been put into a most difficult situation by the folly of the Tories in abandoning the Sterling Area, at the precise moment when a Common Market was being created in Europe. Thus we run the risk of a serious decline in our exports when our internal production is already on the brink of a decline. We should be making the most vigorous representations to Mr Eisenhower against any further cuts in US demand and foreign aid instead of trying to help to create a slump.

The reaction of Labour seems clear. It must press for a change in policy and prepare itself for a decisive change. It is fortunate that the leadership of the party is fully aware of the problems it faces. Unregulated and unco-ordinated industrial action can debauch the currency but cannot secure advantages to the working-class. If anything, its real share in the national income is smaller now than it was when money wages were 60 per cent. less. What is needed is the decisive increase in investment which can come about only if a coherent wage policy can be negotiated with the unions. At the same time a conscious agreement on wages presupposes a control of investment to eliminate wastage of scarce resources, a control of imports and international payments, and a massive increase in the budget surplus so as to finance the increase in investment without an increase in private gains.

The drift towards convertibility has made a reversal of policy increasingly difficult. We must try to prevail on the US to co-operate: if we are not successful we shall have to be prepared to make very considerable sacrifices in order to rebuild a viable Sterling Area system on our own. Once these two immediate tasks are accomplished the going will be easy: but there is a difficult period to transition ahead in which the will to sacrifices of the British people may be tested to the full. It may be asked why Britain should try to give a lead and be prepared for some material sacrifice. The answer is clear. The last five years have shown that the free enterprise system is inherently unstable: it has brought us to the point where we can avoid a continuous rise in prices only at the cost of stagnation at home and distress in the poor areas.

To meet this threat – and the price of failure will be high – we must be prepared to set by, not consume, what Harold Wilson has called the 'seed corn', the funds for the planned investment which alone can ensure future expansion.

THOMAS BALOGH

London Diary

A FRIEND in North Carolina writes in disappointed fury to say that Nye Bevan's *Face the Nation* programme was not carried by his local station; its place was taken by a Fundamentalist preacher prophesying eternal rather than temporal hell-fire. In most places he has so far visited, however, Nye seems to have put himself over wonderfully. Harvard and Dartmouth, for instance, whether or not they agreed with him about Germany and the Middle East, at least recognised him as somebody who could offer them an alternative to the sterile platitudes of Eisenhower and Dulles. Nye's real problem, of course, comes when he faces big business groups. He has to sell himself to the 'power elite' in America without selling his principles. If he is still as much of a red bogy in America as he was when I was last there, his position as prospective foreign secretary here will be seriously jeopardised. Equally, as prospective foreign secretary, he must convince Americans that he means what he says; they must understand that the next Labour government is going to have an independent will of its own and is not going to be a tail to every kite flown in Washington. My bet is that Nye will succeed. How many times in this country have I heard people who apparently expected Nye to appear with horns and a pitchfork, find that he was surprisingly like a Buckinghamshire farmer with a hard head for political business – as well as a brilliant turn of phrase and an infectious gusto.

* * *

Those who saw the last days of the Kuomintang – a fantastic scene of corruption and wickedness – and watched the birth of the new China are understandably hesitant about criticising the China of today. All they say about its constructive achievements is true. But there is a shock in store for them if they have not read (or believed) the details about the 'rectification' and the brainwashing and purges that have gone on since Mao's speech about the hundred blooms. I've now read full reports from the Chinese press of the examination and criticism of various Chinese writers, including two whose records are well known to me, Fei Hsaio-tung and Hsaio Ch'ien. The first is the author of a classic study of a Chinese village; he has lived in this country and became, after the Chinese revolution, the head of the School of Nationalities in Peking. When I went to see him there two years ago he enthusiastically argued the Communist case, refusing to make any concessions to my western emphasis on liberty. He wrote a long letter after my visit – unfortunately too long to publish – defending his repudiation of western notions. He has now been denounced for the abominable crime of using the opportunity of Mao's speech to set up a new 'sociological' school with objective standards. This, it seems, makes him disloyal to China. Hsaio Ch'ien is an excellent writer who made a name for himself in this country, returned to China after the revolution and became editor of a leading literary magazine. Two years ago in Peking I spent some hours walking with him among the beauties of the Forbidden City and arguing about the crucial importance of freedom to literary work. He, too, vigorously defended the Communist line. The Chinese press now records a series of savage cross-examinations in which every humorous or whimsical remark he has made is quoted as a proof of his subservience to the West. Even his joke that the Chinese always seemed to be smiling because of the shape of their eyes is quoted to show that he wished to denigrate his countrymen. The deliberate framing of the case against him by Communist writers, some of whom sounded jealous of his job, is nauseating. These are only two cases which I happen to know. The political reason for this brainwashing is clear. The Democratic League, which worked with the Communists against the Kuomintang and which has co-operated in the still nominally coalition government of Peking, is being purged just as the Social Democrats were in East Europe when the Communists no longer needed their support.

* * *

I see that the young Realists have walked off with the big prizes at the John Moores exhibition in Liverpool. The competition had a section for artists under 35 (first prize £500) as well as an open section (first prize £1,000), but the winner of the open section turned out to be someone eligible for the under-35s. The organisers of future competitions of this kind might take heed, and have a special section not for the under-35s but for the over-35s. Certainly the awards were significant of the present triumph of youth: the young at least have never had it easier, and I am reminded of Cyril Connolly's lament that the artists who really need help are not those in their twenties but the ones around forty. It is equally significant that both the young champions, Jack Smith – who won his £1,000 over the heads of such lesser prize-winners as Ceri Richards, Victor Pasmore and Sir Matthew Smith – and John Bratby, who merely won in his own class, are the leading members of the new Realist movement – or were before Smith embarked upon his latest phase. Those who have seen announcements of the names of the jury – John Berger, Lawrence Gowing, Eric Newton, John Rothenstein and Hugh Scrutton – may feel, on learning the results, that Berger must have been at his most persuasive on the day the jury sat. Oddly enough, Berger was absent ill.

A fortnight ago a paragraph appeared here about a lady who met with fantastic difficulties in sending four shillings to Belgium in order to buy a photograph of Pieter Breughel's *Dulle Griet*. My paragraph was reprinted in the *News Chronicle*, which received from Antwerp a letter from a correspondent in Belgium offering to send her the photograph. I also received from correspondents a photograph of the whole picture and a book with reproductions of all its details. It looks as if my original correspondent will be well supplied with copies. But the most generally useful upshot is a letter published on another page of this issue by David Ennals, of the United Nations Association, who explains the UNESCO coupon scheme for circumventing this bureaucratic nonsense. Very odd, really, that we shouldn't all know what UNESCO can do for us!

* * *

The Battle of Newton Road would make an admirable script for an Ealing comedy. The residents of pleasant streets in Paddington and St John's Wood resent the hideous yellow lighting and sub-topian lamp-posts which their nominal 'servants', the councillors, are thrusting upon them. The residents of Newton Road ask if they can have the 'period' lamp-standards used in some of the squares near Hyde Park. No, says Mr Uzielli, chairman of the Paddington works committee, it would cost another £150. Very well, say the residents, we will foot the bill. This is too much for Mr Uzielli's bureaucratic conscience. It is, he declares, 'a frightful proposition'; if such exceptions are allowed, 'every quaint little street in London would want to do things its own way'. No, no. The Town Hall knows best. It cannot let anarchy triumph in Paddington. So it will poke up concrete lamp-posts and let the sodium lights blaze—all in the interests of uniformity and modernity. No matter that this kind of street furniture is ugly and this bilious lighting already out of date. But one minor victory has already been won by the people of St John's Wood. After strong protests, including a petition with thousands of signatures, they have persuaded their council to put up experimental lighting in two streets: they are to say which type they prefer. I hope Newton Road wins its battle, too, and that its residents take the zealous Mr Uzielli at his word when he invites them to retire him at the next election if they dislike what he thinks is good for them.

* * *

It is not enough to ridicule the sentimental protests of hunting, shooting and fishing people who do not observe a minute's silence in honour of the countless animals which die slowly in laboratories 'in the service of mankind'. Vivisected animals are out of sight and out of mind; the dog circling the sky above us is out of sight but obsesses public imagination. The odd question is where this animal love begins and ends. Clearly we are not passionately concerned about foxes. Myxamatosis amongst rats would have been generally welcomed. I suppose it is mainly a question of familiarity. How can warm, furry, bunny-rabbits be vermin? We don't become really intimate with goldfish or budgerigars. We can, I'm glad to say, get worked up about cruelty to old horses. Some of us mind intensely about cats because they become part of our lives. As for dogs, they are the closest to us of all and any form of cruelty to them arouses amongst many people an anger they do not feel about infinitely greater suffering inflicted on mere human beings in many parts of the world.

CRITIC

This England

Prizes: £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

I am afraid it is useless for animal lovers, who deplore the sending of live dogs into space, to protest to a nation which is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the wholesale murder of their royal family.—Letter in *Evening Standard*. (R. Hardaker.)

Would it not be a good thing if a Christmas postage stamp were issued this year?

It would prove to the world that England has not entirely lost the Christian message.—Letter in *Star*. (F. Schaffer.)

Five hundred people who believe in fairies have written to jolly Mrs Kim Mzyk asking if they can join her 'wee folk' club.

Now she is busy picking out the genuine applicants. She told me: 'I have had to limit membership to people who are really sympathetic to fairies. I cannot have just anyone in my club, so I'm sifting out the phonies'.—*Woman's Sunday Mirror*. (B. Paterson.)

Saving the Lords

I dreamed that I dwelt in a marble hall
With Cecil B. deMille
And the Ten Commandments on the wall
Were part of a movie bill;
Ten to keep and the last man in –
Thank God that it isn't eleven –
Thought I, as we talked of sex and sin
And the big Top Men of Heaven.

The Pope and Moses had come to tea
With Joshua (Eisenhower)
Billy Graham and Winston C.
And Chancellor Adenauer;
And everyone turned to Cecil and me,
But we shrugged, with a modest sigh –
For films are made by Cecil B.,
But only God knows why.

A ghost appeared at the Gates of Pearl
In a couple of sandwich-boards
With the motto and crest of a belted earl:
THOU SHALT HONOUR THE HOUSE OF LORDS.
For Home was the sailor (hume from the sea)
And the hunter hume from the hill
To beg a boon of the Pope and me
And Cecil Blount deMille.

So we worked at a billion dollar script
With tin-pan ducal songs
And a thousand duchesses who skipped
In *fleur-de-lis* sarongs.
In days of old they rocked and rolled
And I saw through a mist of tears
In the Field of the Cloth of Techni-Gold
A Cecil save the Peers.

REGINALD REYNOLDS

More than 400 of the funniest This Englands 1953-57 are collected in the new THIS ENGLAND, with pictures by Nicolas Bentley. THIS ENGLAND costs only 2s. 6d. If your newsagent and bookseller have sold out, send 2s. 9d. to the Publisher, New Statesman, Gt. Turnstile, London, WC1.

Mao in Moscow

THE official reason for Mao Tse-tung's visit to Moscow are this week's celebrations of the October revolution. Unofficially Mao has some hard bargaining in front of him. The Soviet Union needs Chinese help to patch up the cracks in the Communist alliance, and Mao badly needs Russian economic aid. Western businessmen report that during the last six months the Chinese appear to have had practically no foreign exchange, that future plans for heavy industrial construction in China have been cut back, and that the Chinese budget for 1956 had an excess of income over expenditure of 6 per cent. The difference was reduced to 2.8 per cent. by the use of all available reserves and an overdraft from the state bank. Grains, pork, oil and cotton cloth are still rationed in China and there have been official calls for the utmost economy in their use. This economic crisis is partly because China is indirectly paying for Budapest and the general unrest in eastern Europe. Russian imports from eastern Europe have been cut down, and supplies which might otherwise have gone to China have been increased. The Russian loans to eastern Europe of 2,650 million roubles make it less likely that there will be much to spare for China.

All the same, Mao will be negotiating from a position of strength, in striking contrast to the last time he went to Moscow eight years ago, when most of the West and many Chinese believed that the Communist government in Peking could not survive. China is now one of the most politically disciplined countries in the world. Changes in government policy are picked up with startling swiftness by wall newspapers and at factory meetings all over the country. Western visitors to Peking are not besieged, as they are in Moscow, with requests for information, jazz records and old clothes. Chinese students and intellectuals criticised government officials and occasionally government policies during the short period of the Hundred Flowers movement, but they never rioted as Russian students did at Tiflis. Mao himself is the senior leader of world Communism. No Beria, Molotov or Zhukov has publicly challenged his power. The Chinese Communist Party reacted slowly and cautiously to the Krushchev denunciation of Stalin and so its prestige has not been shaken by any backtracking. But in public the Chinese have been particularly careful not to encourage any comparison between Chinese rectitude and Russian errors. Chou En-lai, during his visits to Warsaw and Budapest this spring, stressed the need for Communist unity. In China itself *People's Daily*, the Peking *Pravda*, which normally holds all journalistic records for the slowness of its comments, published last year an editorial justifying the Russian action the morning after Soviet troops moved into Budapest. The surface cracks which appeared in Sino-Soviet relations during the period of the Hundred Flowers have been plastered over. Most of the leading 'rightists', the outstanding critics produced by the movement, have included in the confessions of their 'errors' their excessive criticism of the USSR and Stalin and their lack of gratitude for Soviet help to China.

To balance these cards in Mao's hands there is China's economic dependence on the USSR. Eighty per cent. of China's trade is with other Communist countries and more than half is with the USSR. Russia is completely equipping 211 Chinese industrial sites and Russian experts are

working on a long list of projects in China, varying from railway planning and steel mills to the promised Russian aid for Chinese atomic installations. Where Russian machinery has already been installed, China is dependent on Russian spare parts and sometimes on Russian servicing. This Russian aid has been partly paid for by two Russian loans to China (300 million US dollars in 1950, and 520 million roubles in 1954) and partly by Chinese exports, mostly of agricultural produce and raw materials. A second reason why Mao will do his best to meet Russian requirements and help patch up the facade of international Communism is that he, like the other Chinese leaders, is a devoted Communist, possibly more so than the present Russian leaders. There is in China an apparently immense and genuine admiration for the achievement of the first Communist country. Even at the height of the Hundred Flowers movement there was no wholesale, open criticism of any complete aspect of Russian life, and the solidity of the alliance was never questioned. The USSR's popularity has been increased by the way in which Russian economic aid was given to China. Territorial concessions, like the Russian stationing of troops at Port Arthur, were given up, not claimed. The manners of the Russian technicians were made as much of a contrast as possible to what was remembered of western manners. Most of the Russians learned to speak a little Chinese; they were specially cautioned against arrogant behaviour; and, to guard against any possible mishap, they were kept out of the way of the Chinese as much as possible.

Meanwhile Russian exhibitions toured China, Russian films appeared at almost every cinema, and Russian books in translation flooded Chinese bookshops. Students and aspiring Communist Party members in China learned to speak Russian and trained themselves on Russian histories and political textbooks. Chinese young people even learned to admire heavy Victorian oils in the Russian manner. 'Our classical pictures are so boring,' I was told not long ago. 'Russian pictures are moral and they teach us interesting lessons about the daily life of the great Soviet people in their struggle for peace and Socialist achievement.'

LOIS MITCHISON

A Hundred Years of Mountains

ON 6 November, 1857, three young men in their twenties—William and Charles Mathews and a cousin—entertained an older man to dinner at their house near Birmingham, to discuss starting a climbing club. The guest, whom they had met that summer in the Oberland, was Edward Kennedy, then 40, who had rowed in the first race for the Diamond Sculls, and helped to found, also in 1857, the Royal Society for the Assistance of Discharged Prisoners. By the end of the year they had established the Alpine Club—not the *British* AC; till 1862 there were no others. Their aims were sociable: to meet other mountaineers, talk over last year's expeditions and find allies for next. There were to be frequent dinners (to be kept cheap) and a climbing qualification. This, in essentials, has been the pattern of the club for a century. It does not, like the mammoth clubs of the Alpine countries, try to rope in everybody, nor does it, like them, build mountain-huts and run training-courses. Though it has sponsored, jointly with the Royal Geographical Society, the long line of Everest expeditions, it has not the resources to organise such undertakings on its own, and its function has remained resolutely sociable.

Within a few months of the Birmingham dinner, the club had a hundred members, nearly all in their twenties and thirties, and as their first president they elected John Ball, then 39, the friend of Cavour and an Irish Liberal MP. The Alps lay before them, with half the great Oberland peaks unclimbed, and all but two of the Zermatt giants. In eight years, this lucky first generation had knocked off nearly 80 virgin peaks and passes. Abruptly, this golden age ended in 1865, when four of the seven who an hour earlier had stood on top of the Matterhorn crashed down its northern face, and Whymper, the one British survivor—still only 25—virtually gave up Alpine climbing. There was public disapproval, and *The Times* was outraged—'Why is the best blood of England to waste itself in staining the eternal snow?' Though individuals might go on in much the same way as before, the club itself was put on the defensive.

As the original members grew into their fifties and sixties, they imported into it the natural conservatism of age, weighted by the determination never again to become a public target; and by the eighties and nineties the club had developed the gravity of the Eminent Victorian. Its 400 members reflected all sides of professional life: Leslie Stephen, John Tyndall, Martin Conway, were equally famous inside the club and beyond it, while among the members who are usually thought of in quite other contexts were Matthew Arnold, Joseph Chamberlain, W. E. Forster of the 1870 Education Act, Farrer the botanist, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, James Bryce (whose qualifying climbs included Ararat and Soracte), Oscar Browning, John Ruskin. Ruskin got in under the rule which allows 'a contribution to mountain literature, science or art' instead of the usual qualification of so many major expeditions, but the rest all climbed their way in—as, later, did A. E. W. Mason, John Buchan, W. P. Ker, L. S. Amery, I. A. Richards, Sir John Clapham, Lord Hailsham, Christopher Brasher and Sir Robert Robinson, PRS.

The early members who, with their breast-high ice-axes, hobnail boots and washing-line ropes, had hardly known any rules to break, in time became the formers of rules and guardians of tradition. As they were always grumbling that the Alps were exhausted, they could not reasonably object when members went off to open up the Caucasus, Andes and Rockies; but they often did object when the rising generation, lacking new Alpine peaks, made new and harder routes up the old ones, especially when these required a technique well beyond their own standards. Ungentlemanly things like crampons and tennis shoes might go on in other ranges, but the holy of holies of Zermatt or the Oberland must be guarded against the heretic and infidel. The outstanding British figure of this second stage was Mummery, who pioneered the Zmutt ridge of the Matterhorn and the Grépon by the crack which still bears his name; but he was kept out of the club for some years, whether because he ran a tanning business, as many supposed, or because he nipped up Aiguilles in rubbers and was therefore suspect as a 'rock-gymnast', a term which always carried an overtone of contempt.

The gap in outlook between those most active in climbing, and those most active in running the club, widened in the 20 years before the First World War. In the Alps, V. J. E. Ryan (never a member) and Geoffrey Young were making their great routes; away in Garhwal Tom Longstaff was celebrating the AC jubilee by climbing Trisul, the highest top yet reached; but the tone of the club was largely set by Sir Edward Davidson, Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office, who was president from 1911 to 1914 and whom a later president described as 'the club incarnate'—and a yet later one as 'an impenetrable snob'. Davidson, who used to have two first-class guides for six or eight weeks every year without achieving anything very remarkable, held court at the Riffel Alp and pontificated on what should, or more often should not, be done. To him Young and Ryan were not blazing trails for others to follow: they personally might escape censure, but he considered that 'the limit of what is justifiable . . . has been reached if not exceeded so far as gymnastic rock-climbing is concerned'. The sound AC man of that era, who took his due place between two guides up a classic route and later (dinner-jacketed, and leaving his two companions to eat below the salt in the guides' room) at the *table d'hôte* of the right hotel, is a type now as outdated as the Burberry weatherproof Alpine kit ('with liberty-giving pivot sleeves') and Jæger knitted knickers illustrated in contemporary *Alpine Journals*.

At least, while Davidson reigned as King of the Riffel, British climbers were, thanks to the less orthodox, in the first flight. But between the wars the AC tone of superiority was not, in the Alps, based on current realities. The French had taken up the exploration of the Chamonix Aiguilles where Young and Ryan had left off; the Germans and Austrians were, by a technique based on a free use of pitons, climbing 'impossible' rock faces; British climbers like Longland and Kirkus were, without pitons but with an improved technique of belaying, putting up new standards on rocks at home. But these were the years when the club was dominated by Colonel Strutt, whose power was exercised from 1927 to 1938, first as editor of the *Journal*, then as president. This fantastic die-hard disapproved of skis and crampons, would not allow the use of the word 'pitch' in reports of climbs, and, when the Russians changed the name of a peak in the Pamirs to Mt Lenin, Strutt announced that he would never allow the name of a 'notorious assassin who died in a lunatic asylum' to darken his pages. Pitons and karabiners sent him into a fury of editorial comment; but he never inquired what spirit of experiment and frustrated adventure had inspired the desperate young Germans to their use. He denounced the incompetence that lay behind the growing accident lists without grasping their implication: that climbing was now a popular sport, and the code of behaviour appropriate to a middle-class Briton able to pay for guides could mean nothing to the young Continental climber in the Depression.

Between the wars British climbers won respect mainly for what they did outside the Alps; it was in Kenya and the Himalaya that Shipton, Smythe and Tilman made their mark. Everest might be felt by foreign climbers to be too much a British monopoly, but there was real admiration for the ascents of Kamet (1931) and Nanda Devi (1936) carried out—in contrast to the grandiose German parties which ended in tragedy on Nanga Parbat—by small parties with a minimum of fuss. To some of the inter-war generation, especially those who started with the Oxford and Cambridge clubs, membership of the AC might still offer a coveted blue ribbon, and a chance to rub shoulders with giants like Freshfield or Collie; but to the much greater numbers starting with one of the many

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DECEMBER *Weidenfeld & Nicolson* **25s; RU 5s 9d**

THE LAST GRAIN RACE
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JANUARY *Secker & Warburg* **21s; RU 5s 9d**

THE MODERN UNIVERSE
by Raymond A. Lyttleton, F.R.S.

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FEBRUARY *Hodder & Stoughton* **16s; RU 5s 9d**

THE PROVING FLIGHT
by David Beaty

A novel about the maiden flight of a great new airliner—and an exciting tale of a conflict of loyalties above the Atlantic. 'The most exciting book I have ever read'—Elizabeth Bowen.

MARCH *Secker & Warburg* **14s; RU 5s 9d**

PORTRAITS FROM MEMORY
by Bertrand Russell

The greatest living philosopher recalls some of his more eminent contemporaries—Shaw, Conrad, Wells, D. H. Lawrence, the Webbs—and reflects with characteristic brilliance on the issues facing mankind today. 'A display of learning, experience and vivacity'—*The Times Literary Supplement*.

APRIL *Allen & Unwin* **16s; RU 5s 9d**

WALLS OF JERICHO
by Margaret Wheeler

'Far more than a clear, accurate, well illustrated account of what we know of Jericho in the light of recent excavations: it is a gay, chatty, unassuming description of life in a large excavation camp.'—Glyn Daniel. With plates and line drawings.

MAY *Chatto & Windus* **21s; RU 5s 9d**

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DECEMBER *Thames & Hudson* quarto **50s; RU 28s 6d**

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A truly beautiful picture book; 188 quarto plates (6 in colour) taking us into the very heart of India 'whose people and places find a faithful representation . . . Masterpieces'—*The Times of India.*

JANUARY *Thames & Hudson* quarto **42s; RU 27s**

The Week-End Book
Edited by SIR FRANCIS MEYNELL

A famous anthology with many new sections making it 'more than ever the *perfect bedside book* for the week-end cottage'—*Daily Telegraph*. With many line drawings and decorations.

FEBRUARY *The Nonesuch Press* **20s; RU 10s 6d**

Gallipoli by ALAN MOOREHEAD

The *Sunday Times* Book Prize Winner for 1956. 'Mr. Moorehead is to be congratulated on the skilful, objective, and most readable way in which he has presented the story'—Sir Winston Churchill. Many plates.

MARCH *Hamish Hamilton* **21s; RU 12s**

Dangerous Estate by FRANCIS WILLIAMS

A former editor of the *Daily Herald* and NS writer on the Press traces 'the anatomy of newspapers' in this 'brilliantly constructed and "compulsively readable" ' book—Claud Cockburn.

MARCH *Longmans* **24s; RU 12s 6d**

The Englishman's Flora
by GEOFFREY GRIGSON

'A work of reference on a grand scale' wrote the *Sunday Times* of this fascinating guide to English wild plants and flowers, detailing their uses in magic, mythology and medicine, their local names and their associations in folk-lore. With 45 drawings from the early Herbals.

APRIL *Phoenix House* quarto **63s; RU 30s**

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Compiled by JOHN HADFIELD

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vigorous clubs of the North or Midlands, it appeared a stuffy and backward-looking institution, offering only a rather musty prestige.

Since the war, the picture has greatly changed: there has been a British renaissance of climbing, and it has been met with sympathy by the lively elders like Geoffrey Young and Tom Longstaff who in the traditional way became presidents 30 years after their mountain heyday. It was largely due to the change in atmosphere they brought about that so many of the outstanding members of the generation which went to the Alps after the war should (after forming their splinter group called with deliberate tartness the Alpine *Climbing* Group) have ended up in the bosom of the club. These young men, who had mostly started on Welsh rock, went out to the Alps not caring a damn for what Colonel Strutt had thought. If a first-class climb like the south ridge of the Aiguille Noire was the better for a few pitons, then why on earth not use them? Like their Continental contemporaries, they had no money for guides, camped when they weren't in huts, and were seldom seen at the traditional *tables d'hôte*. They used the continental system of grading climbs, and their heroes were men like the Italians Gervasutti and Cassin and the Frenchman Allain whose exploits in the Thirties had made Strutt speechless ('Of "Impossibilities" – or futilities – I shall not speak'). Beginning with Tom Bourdillon's lead on the North face of the Dru in 1950, they soon showed they were able to take on the hardest modern routes, and three years ago on the Blaitière Joe Brown and Don Whillans were the first Britons to make a major new Alpine route since 1933. Of course there have been cries of 'rock gymnast' from the old guard; but these began to sound rather silly when the same climbers, Bourdillon and Brown, Westmacott and Band, proved themselves on Everest and Kanchenjunga in the most exacting ice and snow.

Today the Club still provides a comfortable home for the ordinary, not very ambitious climber; but the tone is set by the Everest generation and in this centenary year John Hunt is president, the youngest by far for 50 years. Its most active members are wide awake to what goes on in the wider world of mountaineering, and to the entirely different social set-up of the sport. The centenary has been taken as an occasion for self-scrutiny as well as jubilation; there is a lot of plain speaking about past history in the excellent special number of the *Journal*, and the large question whether the club can keep its original character in the circumstances of today has been raised by Hunt himself. The club may have lost its exclusive prestige, its monopoly of oracular pronouncement, its Milord attitude; it has gained immensely in vitality. In its hundredth year, when the golden age has started on the further ranges, it seems younger by far than in its 75th; younger, even, than in its 50th.

JANET ADAM SMITH

Fleet Street Notebook

WHEN I was much younger I used sometimes to be surprised to discover behind the tycoon-like exteriors of advertising men in the Savoy Grill the hearts of little children. I am surprised no longer. Much successful advertising, although not, of course, all, depends on the ability to persuade people to close their eyes to the facts of life. It is natural therefore that many advertising agents live in a dream world themselves. They have to, to survive so masterfully. To them Truth In Advertising is not a slogan, It is True. They are masters of the secret of making others believe in the impossible, which is to believe in it oneself. I am therefore by no means surprised that the director of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising and one or two advertising agents of my acquaintance have expressed themselves as deeply shocked by my remark the other week that, although all for the freedom of the press and radio in principle, a number of advertising agents had let it be known that they did not think Muggeridge's views on royalty were likely to attract the right kind of paying customers.

These perturbed practitioners of advertising find it impossible, bless their dear little hearts, to believe that advertising accounts ever rear their heads in the discussion of newspaper or commercial TV policies. I am asked to produce evidence – documentary preferred. But really you know, my dear advertising friends, the world does not work like that at all. Managing directors of advertising agencies do not drop stern notes to editors. They may be professionally disposed to get out of touch with reality but not quite to that extent. But there are plenty of other ways of giving kicks to not so blind horses. Happily, attempts to bring direct influence to bear on newspapers by advertisers or advertising agents are rare in this country. They do, however, occur, as, for example, in a famous case some years ago when the West End cinemas boycotted the *Sunday Express* to make it change its film critic.

However, in the main, such influence as is attempted – such influence, for instance, as I reported had been suspected in the Muggeridge case – is much more subtle. It arises from circumstances well set out by the Royal Commission on the Press when it remarked in its conclusions: 'So long as newspapers do not pay without advertising revenue a newspaper may well think twice before it adopts any policy which is likely to reduce advertisers' demands for its space . . . a newspaper which is not very strong financially will probably avoid taking a line detrimental to advertisers' interests unless by so doing it can increase its interest to the public'. This is the crux of the matter. For the sad fact is that there are now far fewer papers in a financially strong position than there were a few years ago, with the result that many papers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the whispered word in the front office: 'Of course, you know best, old boy, but we've got to think of the advertisers'. Perhaps too sensitive. Perhaps more sensitive than the advertising agents, bless their innocent noble hearts, wish for or actually realise. The fact is that the balance of power in a good part of Fleet Street has drastically altered, with the result that, while it is still the case that the financially powerful are 'under no necessity to have regard to the interests of advertisers' (to quote the Royal Commission again), the converse is becoming far too true for far too many papers. Advertising agents, when they are not dreamers, are businessmen, and from the commercial point of view there is a good deal to say for the proposition I propounded in my previous article, that 'independence is all right so long as it doesn't upset those with money to spend'. It is not, however, the sort of proposition that makes for a good press.

I have no doubt that the majority of the big advertising agents, and certainly the best of them, agree with me over this. But those who feel genuinely upset by the fear that advertising influence and editorial policy may be in danger of getting out of balance have the remedy in their own hands. It is to reverse the recent trend, which is at the root of a good deal of Fleet Street's current problems, to greater and greater concentration of advertising expenditure on a few of the top leaders in each field. Advertising agents, of course, argue that, with the present polarisation of the press, they can cover the consumer market effectively by such a method instead of dispersing their forces. This ignores the fact that despite the current economic *malaise* of many middle-group papers the best of them still command a particular relationship with their readers that is available to the advertiser as well as to the editorial staff. It seems also time that advertising agents divested themselves to a greater extent of the old myth that those who love the Establishment have money and those who don't haven't. The real issue, however, is the extent to which the necessary and far from objectionable dependence of the press on advertising – which is by no means new – can be prevented from producing a deference to the wishes of advertisers, real or imagined, that hits at all nonconformity. It is, of course, true that it is only the less sturdy, morally or commercially, that are amenable to such influences. No advertising agent in his senses is going, for instance, to imagine that he can either directly or indirectly influence, for example, say, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Manchester Guardian* or the leading weekly reviews such as the *Economist*, the *Spectator* and this journal. The difficulty is that the present trend of advertising, with its emphasis on the advantages of concentration, is putting more and more papers and periodicals of various kinds into the position where, in the Royal Commission's words, they may feel themselves forced 'to think twice' before adopting 'any policy which is likely to reduce advertisers' demands'.

FRANCIS WILLIAMS

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The Arts and Entertainment

The Cautious Critics

In the orthodox arts the critics are more adventurous than the public; in jazz they are much more conservative, to judge by the polls which the *Melody Maker* has lately organised among its readers, and among 25 assorted reviewers and other oracles. The rank-and-file were all for innovation. Even Louis Armstrong, for whom the sentimental British cat tends to vote as automatically as the Irish immigrant for a municipal candidate named Kelly, only beat his modernist rival among the trumpets by a shortish head. The critics, on the other hand, showed a caution verging on paralysis: most of their choices might safely have been made in 1939. This, of course, is an advance. Five years ago a British jazz critics' poll might well have reflected the taste of a knowledgeable Negro musician in 1927. Nevertheless, it has come as a slight shock. After all, European jazz critics, unlike most American ones, have in the past actually exercised some influence on public taste, and rejoiced to concur with the common listener all the more because they knew that he concurred with them. Well, they no longer concur. Even the two critics in closest *rapport* with the cats agree with them on no more than nine out of a possible 21 favourite musicians, singers, bands, etc., and the critic with the record for nonconformity – Mr Kingsley Amis – concurs only once, though his colleagues on the *Sunday Times*, the NEW STATESMAN, the *Daily Worker* and a few others run him pretty close in their dissidence. No doubt this may merely mean that the critics are sounder judges than the public. But what if it meant that they are just reluctant to recognise new talent?

There are sound reasons why jazz critics should be conservative. In the 'straight' arts critics are haunted by the fear of being behind the times, because in our days good artists have generally emerged from 'new movements', or at any rate from movements which strongly reacted against their predecessors. But the jazz critic knows that in his art the routine of fashion change is as much imposed by sales departments as in the motor industry. It is the press-agent, not the jazz critic, who identifies the new and the good: barring the Christmas ballad, the 'novelty number' is perhaps the most despised product of Tin Pan Alley. The trouble is that *some* novelty in the popular arts – and the most interesting – is genuine and fruitful. The smart boys will hail it, even if it is anti-commercial, because it saves them the trouble of thinking up new gimmicks themselves. But the critics will, for that very reason, hold back, so that 'modern' trends in jazz have tended to be pioneered by an alliance between avant-garde cats and musicians on one hand, the commercial fashion-hounds on the other. Such are the complexities of life in an art in which the Third Programme and Radio Luxembourg are inextricably merged.

Let us forget these complexities to welcome the admirable and growing fashion among recording companies of producing what ought, I suppose, to be called documentary and educational LPs. Alan Lomax, who gave us *Blues in the Mississippi Night*, has now come out with the equally magnificent collection of 18 tape-recorded labour-camp songs, *Murderers' Home* (Nixa NJL 11). The only thing wrong about this marvellous record is a particularly useless sleeve-note, that contains neither a list of the songs, nor their text, which is almost impossible to understand without it. As the cost of an LP sleeve to the purchaser is at least that of a large paperback book, it is not too much to expect the notes on it to be designed for maximum information. Vanguard supply us with *A Night at Count Basie's* (PPL 11005), which recaptures the spirit of jazz played – I need hardly say superbly played – in a New York neighbourhood bar, and *A Night at the Apollo* (PPL 11004), a unique recording made at the leading coloured variety-theatre in New York: bands, tap dancers, impersonations and comedy routines, amateur show and all.

However, the most generally welcome of these unorthodox recordings is also the most surprising: *What is Jazz?* (Philips BBL 7149), an illustrated lecture by the well-known conductor and pianist Leonard Bernstein. This is a wholly admirable piece of work: lucid, knowledgeable, witty, civilised, and absolutely perfect for the curious layman or the young jazz-lover who wishes to take his appreciation of jazz beyond foot-tapping. Some of us may not agree with Mr Bernstein that the recent convergence between 'cool' jazz and classical concert music is a good thing, or that the horn-rims and sober clothes of the modern jazzmen are an advance on the unintellectual atmosphere of the older ones. The late Art Tatum (Columbia 33C 9039) and Lionel Hampton (Columbia CLP 1136) play no less dazzlingly, enchantingly and intelligently, because they never saw the inside of a conservatoire; and the late Charlie Parker (*April in Paris*, Columbia 33CX 10081) played no better because he was accompanied by parts of a symphony orchestra. In fact, he played poorly, though perhaps not for that reason. The end of the popular arts is not to become like the classy ones. And though our gratitude to Mr Bernstein is immense, he might remember that W. C. Fields would not have gained if someone had talked him into doing the Fool in *Lear*.

FRANCIS NEWTON

The chief defect of Henry King

"THE CHIEF defect of Henry King", as no reader of Mr. Belloc can forget, "was chewing little bits of string." Poor Henry. His fad had fatal results. String, the Moral points out, is not among the things "the human frame requires". How different from bread! Whoever heard of a slice of string and jam? Bread is hardly ever as *long* as string. It tastes nicer, too.

And bread's a subject on which scientists think the same as sybarites. In other words, it's good for you. It is, say the pundits, tremendously nourishing. According to a recent report*, in the average diet, bread and flour provide more energy, more protein, more nicotinic acid, more iron and more Vitamin B_1, than any other single food.

As basic foods go, bread's the cheapest one going. In terms of food value per penny, it's the best you can get. A nutritional bargain, in fact.

So make sure your family eats plenty of bread every day—good and fresh.

*National Food Survey Committee Report, 1955 (Page 132) published by H.M.S.O.
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Giving Pleasure

By 1910, 'English romanticism had become vulgarised and provincial. There was too much careless painting, an easy reliance on atmosphere and an absence of design and architecture'. I came upon these words of John Piper's when re-reading his *British Romantic Artists* after a visit to his exhibition at the Leicester Galleries. Oddly enough, just before picking up the book I'd been having similar thoughts about the English romanticism of the present day, and the thoughts had been inspired by Piper's exhibition, as well as the Sutherland portraits of Helena Rubinstein on view at the Tate. They hadn't, however, been quite such gloomy thoughts: I'd been wondering at the way in which our latter-day romantics have got away with painting as lame as theirs', at the fact that they have acquired – and I mean deservedly – a high reputation at home and, what is more, a respectable one abroad, when their ability to handle the medium can only be described as, by French or Italian or American standards, amateurish; it is a remarkable tribute to the potency of the poetic atmosphere they create.

Now, when I say that their handling of the medium is feeble, the medium I mean is, of course, oil paint. For instance, the ineptitude with which Piper, in his oil paintings, habitually allows areas of bright colour to jump out of the picture, out of the atmospheric context in which they've been, as it were, unwilling and embarrassed intruders – this ineptitude finds no echo in his water-colour technique. If only, we feel, these painters would stick to water-colour, as many an eminent English painter has done, if only they didn't share the sentiment in Cézanne's song:

La peinture à l'huile
C'est bien difficile,
Mais c'est bien plus beau
Que la peinture à l'eau.

And yet . . . can we really place Piper – as we can certainly place Sutherland – in the great line of English romantic water-colourists? It is not that he is theatrical; he is scarcely more so than J. R. Cozens. It is not even that he is flashy; Constable was often more so. It is rather that the romantic impulse seems sweetened by good taste; there is an element of the charming and agreeable which seems out of place in those lowering or gusty skies. We might say that the romantic artist appears to feel that bad weather is more true than good weather, whereas Piper appears to feel that it's more beautiful.

To say this is not to believe that Piper has ever, what Betjeman strongly denies, 'been tempted by fashion'. It is rather to see Piper as one of those artists, like Maugham or Rattigan, who, while entirely serious in their intentions and ideas, have an involuntary tendency to please. To please: it's a question of pleasing oneself as much as pleasing others, or more. It's not a matter of concessions, but of touch.

The interesting thing about Piper's present

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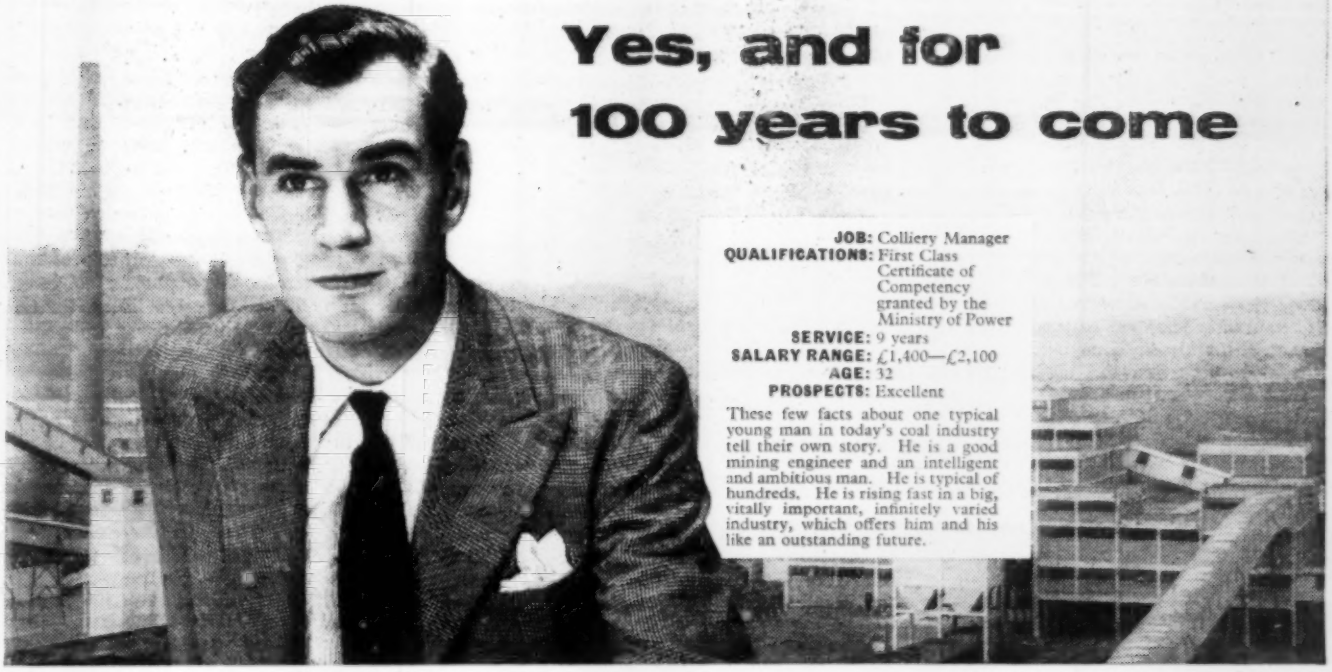

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The material future of Britain depends so much on coal . . . and on the success of the nation's new coal industry. As Britain's need for coal increases every year, so does the need for men ambitious to be mining engineers, electrical and mechanical engineers, and research scientists.

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exhibition is not so much that he has moved towards abstraction (an abstract style, by the way, which has little in common with his abstract style of the Thirties, but grows out of his romantic landscape style) as that some of the oils – the largest and latest ones – are as entirely felicitous, as quietly delightful, as his best water-colours.

The mixed exhibition of mainly Tachist paintings at Tooth's, closing this Saturday, is notable for the works by the two Canadians, Borduas and Riopelle. Borduas has scarcely been seen here before; he gets some ravishing effects through combining energy with prettiness. Riopelle has been seen here a great deal, and been becoming a bit of a bore lately. The works at Tooth's, however, which are very recent, are quite the best things by him I have seen; he now seems to have arrived at a synthesis between the freedom of his manner of *c.* 1949 and the density of his manner of *c.* 1953. The result is an acute impression of concentrated, contained, explosive force.

Gallery One are showing a number of the drawings done by Henri Michaux while under the influence of mescalin. They are very far from being merely curious, and this is an exhibition which really must be seen (it closes on Tuesday), not least because many of these drawings have been reproduced and have lost most of what makes them more than curious, not only in the line-block reproductions in the *Paris Review* but even in the half-tone reproductions in Michaux's book on mescalin, *Misérable Miracle*.

DAVID SYLVESTER

Wexford Gaiety

OF all the Festivals that stipple the map of Europe, that of Wexford is surely the most festive. The organisers realise that a Festival is something more than a string of concerts and opera performances: it ought by rights to be – and here it is – a kind of carnival. Wexford offers all the simple gregarious pleasures short of dancing in the streets; and no doubt we should have had that too but for those autumn puddles reflecting the washed blue sky.

The pretty harbour town, its narrow streets illuminated in the Italian fashion with festoons of coloured lights, is caught up for a whole week in a whirl of enthusiasm and hospitality, opera talk and conviviality of all sorts. It never goes to bed. I wish the Edinburgh Fathers would nip across and take a look at the very thing which their own grand and dignified Festival so notably lacks: the party spirit. So far from being thrown out in the cold at ten sharp, or denied a drink altogether on a Sunday, we are welcome to celebrate wherever we like at all hours. Around three o'clock, in the lounge of the Talbot, a District Justice launches into a long and entertaining ditty about the price of a heifer. Soon the Italian singers will be along, fortified by huge plates of spaghetti, to join in the Irish folk-songs with shouts of glee, and to oblige with a few assorted arias of their own. Spontaneous fun bubbles; the great national sport of 'codding' is indulged on all sides; Wexford, in short, is the best place to forget all about satellites and the arms race and the wage freeze.

Don't run away with the idea that music comes second in the scheme of things. Not at all. The success of the Wexford Festival is firmly based on the traditional partiality of the Irish for Italian opera. In the nineteenth century there used to be long Italian seasons in Dublin with very fine singers in the casts; to realise how the affinity has persisted we have only to think of James Joyce, Bernard Shaw, John McCormack. Voices are what the Irish love and have always loved: their own to begin with, then the rolling theatrical periods of Synge and O'Casey, most of all the sweet lilt of melodious song. It is the achievement of an amateur, a Wexford doctor named Tom Walsh, to have canalised this national passion. Dr Walsh has a passionate enthusiasm for opera and a good ear for a voice; in the selection of singers he has been sometimes helped by the local postman, a shy man who would not care to read his name in print, but who sets off every now and then for La Scala and chooses well. Leaning a little on Glyndebourne for musical and production staff and chorus stiffening, the Wexford team has put on a week of opera for the last seven years: mainly Italian, but sometimes German; originally one opera each year, and now two. This year the choice fell on Donizetti's *La Figlia del Reggimento* and Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*. Next year there may be a rare Verdi and a still rarer Rossini.

There is much point, over and above the national predilection, in sticking to this school and period of opera. Performances are given in the little Theatre Royal, which, when crammed to bursting (its normal Festival state), seats only about 440. In the early nineteenth century it must have been a pretty house with stage boxes, and many famous actors have played there; at some time it was converted into a cinema, with damage which might have been worse if the converters had had more money. Even now, as soon as we are inside, we recognise that this is the kind of theatre from which Rossini and Donizetti sprang, for which they mostly wrote. As in old theatrical prints, the audience is on top of the orchestra (Radio Eireann Light Orchestra, doing not too badly in a field outside their usual round), and could shake hands with the characters – often look, indeed, as though they would like to. A spirit of rare intimacy and shared enjoyment reigns: something quite different from Glyndebourne because it is popular and devil-may-care. We comprehend, as the overture strikes up nearly half an hour late, how Rossini, like Aristophanes, grew up in a world of local jokes and private scandals: how, as Stendhal relates, an actor might well happen to have been imitating on the stage the local bore who that moment was entering his box, sublimely unaware of the situation. Not that this happened at Wexford, where there seem to be no local bores, and, alas, no boxes.

Graziella Sciutti was the heroine of *The Daughter of the Regiment*, and made it clear why this opera was once so popular with audiences and with singers like Jenny Lind and Marcella Sembrich. Just as *L'Elisir d'Amore* gives the sentimental Italian tenor a much-cherished chance to play the fool, so *Figlia* allows the brilliant high soprano to romp around the stage in uniform, swear prettily – and then melt in two or three arias of tender sweetness, of which the best known is 'Convien partir'. Mme Sciutti sang with great verve and charm, and made a captivating *vivandière* to the eye – though it was a pity she didn't play a little sidedrum in the traditional style. She was well supported by the clear-toned and upstanding Tonio of Mario Spina, and by a typically clever sketch of the bluff Sergeant Sulpizio from Geraint Evans.

One thing partially marred our pleasure in both operas: the excessive volume (unnecessary in so small a house) produced almost continually by chorus, orchestra and most of the soloists. I was told that this effect was due to the position of my seat at *Figlia*, and was sedulously placed elsewhere for *L'Italiana*, which is not an opera which lends itself so easily to bawling. But even here, in the very first scene, Paolo Montarsolo (who had also sung Mustafà at Glyndebourne) all but broke my ear-drums – ironically enough, in the phrase 'Cara, m'hai rotto il timpano' addressed to his complaining wife. The crazy finale to Act 1, which went splendidly, is the one place in which a deafening volume has real dramatic point. But in general I think that the very able conductor, Bryan Balkwill, ought to ponder this question of appropriate volume-levels seriously, because the lack of a real hush banished some of the magic from several lyrical episodes, especially in the Donizetti score. In the Rossini, Petre Munteanu was allowed to sing his tenor music very sweetly, and made a great effect. Barbara Howitt, hampered by a sore throat, coped creditably with the difficulties of the title-role. I am sorry to add that Peter Ebert's production, already disfigured by some crudities at Glyndebourne, had become shamelessly self-indulgent at Wexford: characters were made to jig in time to the music (this is the worst Ebert trade-mark) in almost every number of the second act. Joseph Carl's sets were simple and pleasing. The modest scheme of the Festival was filled out by several opera and ballet films and some admirably chosen straight films, including that Italian masterpiece, *Amici per la pelle*; also by a number of recitals, of which those by Gina Bachauer and Anna Raquel Satre aroused particular interest.

I must, alas, pass over with a word Iain Hamilton's new choral work, *The Bermudas*, produced at a BBC Symphony Concert under Rudolf Schwarz with Thomas Hemsley as soloist. It has a considerable poetic charm, which makes it certain that further opportunities will arise of discussing it; but at a first hearing I felt that these qualities – akin to those of Delius setting Whitman – had been purchased at the expense of self-sufficient musical interest; and that the piece, which betrays a romantic temperament, was not so strong or so clear in design as the best of the composer's purely instrumental works. Still, I much look forward to hearing it again.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

René Clair Again

Porte des Lilas is René Clair's best film since the days of *A Nous la Liberté* and *Quatorze Juillet*: a rare, unforeseen pleasure. During twenty years his early films have remained with me as a bright landmark, and as he failed time after time to come up to them – failed honourably – I felt as a critic meaner and meaner. I remember Jean Renoir once remarking on this unfairness; he thought *The Ghost Goes West* and *I Married a Witch* quite up to the old standard. He was wrong – out of kindness, I suspect; for no more than I could he believe in the real return to what was after all a youthful romantic gift. Poetry as a rule dies long before a man is forty, and Clair is one of the screen's poets. It may revive after a difficult and – in his case – painstaking middle age. Double then, for all fervent admirers, must be the pleasure of his new film, which comes to the Curzon from the London Festival.

Of course, we are back in Paris; he has never really been at home anywhere else. One of those shabby intersections with a *bistro* on the corner, a street market nearby, tumbledown houses set in a wasteland. The dusk shot of it, with which the film opens, is beautiful – and fleeting. But nowadays Clair is wary of the picturesque. He spreads himself more on sympathy. His new hero is a flabby, flappy middle-aged shuffler whose old

mother still struggles out to work while he sneaks drinks round the corner. He has an artist friend who sings sadly to the guitar and – when it comes to the point – will sacrifice his last drink to him. The cadger is ashamed, sly, irresistible in a baby way, played by Pierre Brasseur.

Into this ramshackle and apologetic existence comes a murderer on the run; he must be kept in a cellar, fed, flattered, tended when he falls ill. Our amiable lump finds a purpose in life, as others did once during the occupation. He steals; pushes pramfuls of things through the night; braves police cordons and the inquisitiveness of children and the local barmaid. These activities are shared by the reluctant *copain*. One of the most ingenious touches is when two people are reading in a newspaper about the exploits of the wanted thug, and the whole bang-bang epic is enacted by children in the street. The fun, the affection grow more and more; it seems that the visitation of crime may be, as in so many Paris films, Pickwickian; but then the *bistro* girl falls in love, the crook leads her on and prepares to clear out, and the issue must be at the gun point. Clair never loses touch in this balance of fun, gentle exhilaration, and psychological insight, and his obscure urban corner leaves us with its lamps and guitar notes and a pistol shot still echoing.

Another French film, André Cayatte's *An Eye for an Eye* (Cameo-Poly), explores the consequences of a surgeon refusing, after a hard day's work, to turn out for a woman who is ill; after all the hospital is only 20 minutes away and she came in a car. The car breaks down, the woman is badly operated on (this is the Middle East), and dies. The stubby figure of her husband begins to haunt him; he can't get away from it, he searches it out, and in the end the two are interlocked in a grim struggle of wills in the desert. The mood of this film, on edge, sardonic, and quick to fetch out the comic detail in nightmare realism, manages to pursue its relentless way in a single movement. Curd Jurgens plays the conscience-stricken surgeon and Folco Lulli his padding Arab persecutor: the duologue is a brilliant *tour de force*, as indeed is the whole film.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Caps On, Eggheads!

SOME confusion has followed the speech by Mr Gerald Beadle, Director of BBC Television, which was briefly welcomed by Critic in last week's NEW STATESMAN.

Even before commercial television began, its opponents said that its competition would force the BBC to 'lower its standards' in order to attract the mass viewing audience; and, since it began, much that the BBC has said and done has seemed to justify this warning. In many forms of light entertainment there is little to choose between the rival channels: like ITV, the BBC puts on excruciatingly unfunny knockabout comedy and imported Westerns and other American film series (but ITV usually has the best of these, such as they are). On Saturday night in particular, the intelligent, or 'minority', viewer has to switch off altogether for most of the evening, and can find little solace in sound radio either, except for an occasional item on the Third. On Saturdays, according to the BBC, 'the nation is in a mood for relaxation, for light entertainment': the minorities whom it is proud to cater for at other times are ignored. (It might, however, be borne in mind that millions of those who are 'in a mood for light entertainment' go out to find it: some of the millions who stay at home may do so just

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because they happen not to be in that mood.)

Unfortunately, the BBC's attempt to meet the commercial challenge has largely failed. The flight from Channel One, among those viewers who have a choice of programmes, continues; nor can it be disguised by such true, but sophistical, statements as that the BBC's average audience in areas now covered by ITV is larger than ITV's. (This merely means that there are still a lot of people in those areas without TV sets, or with old, unconverted sets.)

Nevertheless, the BBC stuck manfully to its policy of meeting the challenge at all levels and providing a complete and balanced service. There was some indignation in the BBC (and, for that matter, in the ITA also) when one of the cruder ITV tycoons suggested that ITV should do *all* the mass-audience programmes, leaving the serious stuff, documentaries and such to the BBC.

Then Mr Beadle spoke – and many people thought that he was announcing a major change of policy. 'We are losing the mass-audience contest,' he seemed to be saying. 'The commercial people are winning. . . . Good luck to 'em! They're welcome to their moronic millions. *We* will concentrate on fulfilling our historic mission by serving' – and I now quote instead of paraphrasing – 'the advancing tastes and aspirations or the perplexities of an educated democracy in the making' and by going 'nearer to the forefront of taste and intellectual interest.' No wonder the eggheads threw their caps in the air!

Alas! It seems that Mr Beadle was misunderstood (and the text of his speech, if carefully analysed, is as patient of opposite interpretations as the Thirty-nine Articles). Those who asked if this was indeed a change of policy received terse denials. Nor was the fog cleared by the coincidental publication of the BBC's *Annual Report and Accounts* (HMSO, 6s.), which contained no hint of neo-Beadleism and explained placidly that BBC TV cannot really cater for a lot of minorities: 'much of its time on the air must be spent in trying to serve a majority of viewers. . . .'

The truth seems roughly to be:

The BBC does, inevitably, admit that ITV seems to be winning the battle for the mass audience. Making, perhaps, a virtue of necessity, it now explains: 'We are not in competition for the same audience, because we don't have to guarantee a maximum audience all the time, to satisfy advertisers'. The BBC, therefore, feels free to concentrate on *audiences*, in the plural (a point made by Mr Beadle), and believes that it is succeeding in its task if it attracts 'the audience appropriate to each programme'. *But* – and this is now much more strongly emphasised than it seemed to be in Mr Beadle's speech – the BBC also insists: 'We must be able to get the mass audience when we want it'. This is presumably always possible if top fees are paid for the most popular entertainers of the moment: on 19 October, 9¼ million viewers watched a BBC programme called *The Golden Year* – the story of Mr Tommy Steele.

So there is not an absolutely clear contrast between sacred and profane television, the BBC Jekyll and the ITV Hyde. 'Standards' are somewhat mixed. Nothing could be less earnest than the BBC's *Six-Five Special* – a cheerful pandemonium of 'teen-age skiffle-fans and their idols, which attracts some five million viewers every Saturday evening. On the other hand, nothing could, on the face of it, be less characteristic of ITV than the series of lectures on history by Alan Taylor. I say 'on the face of it'; for, though a simple viewer might expect to find these wonderful, and austerely presented, entertainments on the BBC channel, Mr Taylor is, of course, a tabu figure against whom BBC executives wear small prophylactic sachets of garlic. His subject this week was *The Revolutions of 1848*. He uses no notes, is plainly spot-lit; his bow-tie is askew. From the moment he starts, with a homely simile about 1848 – 'like taking the top off a beehive and seeing the whole world of European men moving' – to the end, when he simply turns his back and walks off, you are enthralled: the half-hour flashes by. This series is not shown at a peak hour; but it is seen by nearly two million viewers – many more than the total number of undergraduates to whom Mr Taylor will lecture in his whole Oxford career.

One important continuing function of sound-radio is illustrated in the *Annual Report*. For four days during the Suez crisis, 'the audiences for the 6 o'clock News jumped from a nominal five million to nine million a night, while that of the 9 o'clock News nearly doubled. But the advance of television is irresistible: from 1958, the BBC expects that the number of sound-only licences will diminish by a million a year, and by 1962 (when the BBC's present Charter expires) there will probably be only three million sound-only (£1) licences, but twelve million sound-plus-TV (£4) licences. One can foresee a demand for licences for TV only, without sound. One can also foresee a powerful ITV attack on the BBC's exclusive enjoyment of the licence-fee, especially if the present mass-migration to ITV continues.

I wonder what the government will do about it 1962? Why, there ought to be a Labour government by then.

TOM DRIBERG

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WINE SUPPLEMENT

Restoring a Vineyard

The author of this article is the proprietor of two famous Médoc vineyards—Léoville and Langoa Barton.

THERE was no choice for British subjects resident in France, more especially the able-bodied of military age; and so we all went round to the consulate, then become the embassy, overlooking the Quinconces, where we were told to report next morning at eight with passport, not more than one suit-case and four days' rations. As far as I was concerned this happened about 11.30 p.m. and I had about eight hours to pack my case and prepare my departure. After saying goodbye to my partner, my one thought was to go down to St Julien, take farewell of my faithful friends and retainers and to say good-bye (one scarcely dared say *au revoir*) to the property that had been in the hands of my family for over 100 years. Thus it was that I set foot in Falmouth late on 18 June 1940, a few thousand francs in my pocket and a half filled suit-case in my hand as the sum of my total possessions. On arrival in London I was greeted by a cousin, who was the family historian, with the cry: 'This is wonderful. Here is history repeating itself. Your great-great-grandfather was driven out of France in 1792 and landed in England as you have. Thirty years later he had made a fortune and was able to buy your two vineyards in St Julien as well as several properties in Ireland.' Then followed four years of separation with only the most scanty news, until a great day in November 1944 when I was able to get back for a couple of days. And finally a year later the definitive return to pick up the threads and build anew.

Though my partners had done miracles, at times at great risk to themselves, in keeping the property going, there was a lot that had to be left undone as a result of shortage of labour, lack of supplies, lack of fodder for the horses and so on. Also the fact of the Germans being resident in the château had made more difficult recourse to the black market for such necessities as sulphate of copper and sulphur. Much of the vineyard was therefore in bad order; some of the vines had not been ploughed for two or three years; it had been impossible to make new plantations and even adequately to replace the normal wastage of vines that had died from old age and other natural causes. The result of all this was that perhaps one quarter of the vines were missing.

The first thing to do, therefore, was to get these gaps filled. On a vineyard of about 40 hectares (100 acres) with approximately 400,000 vines, between 80,000 and 100,000 were missing, and it was extremely difficult immediately after the war to buy grafted vines. Even if it had been possible to obtain them all in one year we certainly did not possess the labour to plant them, apart from the fact that such a massive addition of young vines would have completely altered the style and lowered the quality of the wine: you cannot make high-class wine out of young vines, as a number of my neighbours are beginning to find to their cost. The maximum number that could be planted in a year was 30,000 and, as the annual wastage in a vineyard with perhaps half the vines 50 years old is at least 15,000, it can be seen that the replacement of 100,000 is a long process. More especially as in *complantation*, that is the replacement of dead vines, the percentage of young plants that take is considerably lower than in a straightforward plantation.

Then there was the problem of the vines that had not been ploughed for two or three years. They had just been pruned and left, and the state in which they were found is indescribable, with scutch and the large variety of weeds that flourish in the Médoc rampaging to their hearts' content. The easy solution was to pull them up and start again, but this would have meant reducing the average age of the vineyard and thus the quality of the wine. I therefore decided to preserve as many as possible. I was fortunate at that time to have an exceptionally good pair of oxen and an outstanding Basque driver, himself 'as strong as an ox'. By repeated ploughings the earth was loosened and the scutch removed by hand to make a huge mound which has now rotted down to make excellent compost. The results were surprising and after two or three years the field was as clean as any on the property, cleaner indeed than many, and it was then possible to replant the vines that were missing. The work may not have been economic but there had been too many examples in the Médoc of new owners arriving, finding the vineyards much as I found mine in 1945 with a high proportion of vines missing, and adopting the solution of pulling up the old vines to make massive new plantations. This is the reason why a number of classed growths, which made beautiful wines 20 or 30 years ago and were then in big demand, have now almost completely disappeared from the market.

This renovation of the vineyard itself was obviously the most important and urgent task. But supply of casks presented another tricky problem. In 1938 a new Bordeaux cask cost about 100 francs, while its present cost is 8,000 francs (of which the state takes about 50 per cent in taxes). Classed growths invariably, and bourgeois growths frequently, placed all their wine every year in new casks and sold it, wood included. From 1940 all sources of supply were cut off and France had to make do with local oak, of which the highest quality is always scarce. Growers, therefore, had to retain their barrels and use them over and over again, while shippers had to take delivery from the growers in their own casks. By 1946, therefore, the stock of casks in a grower's cellars was in a sorry state and it was urgently necessary to renew it. It was still impossible to get supplies from previous sources, with the iron curtain on one side, and the dollar curtain on the other; so, with the increased demand for French oak, prices soared. Apart from the first growths it is financially impossible for owners to store all their wine in new casks; all they can do is to buy a certain number every year. This is an improvement, but it means that, with few exceptions, the owners of classed growths can store at most a quarter of each crop in new casks.

A similar problem arose about the fermentation vats. These have continually to be renewed and repaired, all doubtful staves being replaced. I was able to do a certain amount of 'cannibalisation' as I had a greater number of vats than actually required. But this was temporary relief and did not solve the problem of obtaining seasoned wood for further repairs. It was then that, in a chance conversation with the old carpenter of St Julien, I learned for the first time that the vats had originally been constructed with oak grown on the property. As there were plenty of trees still remaining, I was able to fell a certain number and have now an adequate quantity of seasoned wood. Other growers have solved the problem by the construction of cement vats; and even at Ch. La Mission Haut Brion, by vats of stainless steel. This is a great break with tradition and though the chemists may explain that the fermentation takes place as well, if not better, in these vats, I am old-fashioned enough to believe that the old wood gives some property to the wine unobtainable from cement or steel.

One of the greatest difficulties during the war was to procure sufficient quantities of sulphur and sulphate of copper to spray the vines. These products were rationed, but the ration was not sufficient and recourse was necessary to the black market or to substitutes, none of which seemed to be really effective. The position did not improve immediately after the war and the search for substitutes continued. This has now been taken up by the big petroleum companies, and soon sulphate of copper will be a thing of the past. Before the war a certain amount of damage was done every year by Cochylis and Eudemis. These are moths which lay their eggs in the vines. When the eggs are hatched, the caterpillar works its way into the grape, consuming the inside and moving on from one to the next. No effective remedy for these used to be known; and, when the vines were sprayed, the moths would depart to a neighbouring vine, only to return when they, in turn, were sprayed. Here again the chemists came to our rescue and several products of full efficacy are now on the market.

It is not often appreciated how little Bordeaux wine prices rose between 1945 and 1955. Indeed I sold my 1953 crop at the same price as 1945. This latter crop was, indeed, a very small one,

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as great damage had been caused by an exceptionally severe late spring frost, but the cost of production has risen out of all proportion. Wages alone, which account for about half the cost of production, have risen from 100 francs per day at the end of 1945 to 763 francs today. The only hope of survival was therefore to increase productivity and to reduce costs, and all my efforts, as those of all other growers, have been directed towards these two ends. As I have said above, one way of increasing production is to have younger vines and modify the established balance of 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. Cabernet Sauvignon by planting Merlots in large quantities. This vine is very productive in good years but lacks the body or guts of the Cabernet and is apt to make 'flabby' wines. Some vineyards have up to 50 per cent. or more Merlots, and I consider this a very serious aspect for the future of Bordeaux wines. The solution, therefore, must be found in lowering costs.

There is a limited extent to which this can be done, for so little of the work can really be mechanised. Pruning, planting, the replacement of stakes and wire, the tying up of the vines, etc., can only be done by hand, and we must keep sufficient workers all the year round for these tasks. Indeed, mechanisation can only assist in ploughing and spraying, and there to a limited degree. If all the spraying were to be done mechanically, other work would have to be found for the men and, as spraying is the most remunerative work of the year, they would take exception to this work being taken away from them entirely. But a tractor has at last been made, by a small manufacturer in Burgundy, which functions perfectly, and its qualities have convinced even the sceptical Médocain.

By 1955 growers could look forward to the future with greater optimism than for many years. The demand for all wine was increasing all over the world and Bordeaux was probably leading the way. We had had a succession of good years since the war, prices were rising, the vineyards were in good order, and for the 1955 vintage prices had reached a remunerative level. It was possible to think of such things as renewing material, repairing buildings and improving the housing of the workers. And then, just as prospects looked brighter than they had for years, there came the exceptionally severe cold of February 1956, about which so much has already been written that I have little to add. To put the position mildly, and speaking of a vineyard which suffered comparatively little, it has put us back several years. Once again we must concentrate on *complantations*, replacing the vines which were killed by the frost – and this at a time when prices are soaring. However, our job is to go on trying to make the best wine possible and to hope that lovers of good wine will be able to pay us a remunerative price, or at any rate one which will enable us to remain in cultivation.

RONALD BARTON

Burgundy or Bordeaux?

THE wine-drinking world is as divided as the political globe. There is the division between Whites and Reds: the Whites suggest that red wines tend to be heady, coarse and aggressive, while the Reds imply that white wines are all very well for women. The Whites themselves are split between Germans and French; while the French Reds, with less fear of foreign intervention, fight a civil war for supremacy – Burgundy versus Bordeaux; and wine drinkers as a whole tend to come down in favour of one or other of the two, which at their best are admittedly without peer among red wines.

As far as popular esteem and costliness are concerned, Burgundy certainly leads. The ready appeal of even the average Burgundy makes it acceptable to those who find claret hard and almost sour. Then the price of a cask of newly made, unimpeachable Chambertin will be about double that of one from any of the *premiers crus* of Bordeaux. But that is partly because there is only about a tenth the amount of genuine Burgundy that there is of claret. Only 12 million bottles, on the average, are available to the whole world from the 10,000 acres which constitute the '*vin fins*' (red and white) of the Côte d'Or; from the 60 or 70 acres of Chambertin comes a mere 12,500 cases. Whereas in Bordeaux, Ch. Lafite alone will generally average over 200,000 bottles each vintage. Moreover, the weather prospects are more capricious in Burgundy than in Bordeaux. And while there is enough claret to go round and to spare, there is never enough Burgundy to satisfy the world demand.

On the other hand, when the connoisseurs are canvassed there is a clear majority for claret. Genuine though this preference may be, it is sometimes not without its snobbish overtones; in some quarters it is as correct to prefer claret to Burgundy as it is to like 'dry' and not 'sweet' sherry. Claret, too, has the advantage of more talking points. Comparisons are more possible between châteaux, communes and claret vintages than with Burgundies, which vary according to proprietorial skill or fancy. The preference for claret is indeed partly based upon a not unjustified suspicion of Burgundy; for it is certainly widely falsified, to a greater or lesser venal degree. In spite of the efforts of many French governments and the laws of *Appellation Controllée*, no one pretends that every 'Beaune' or 'Pommard' is free from a little initial assistance from the Rhone or even farther afield. When it is remembered that in the Paris region alone the annual consumption of Beaujolais – the prolific, cadet branch of Burgundy – is estimated at a third more than the total made each year, the temptations with the much rarer Côte d'Or wines are obvious.

Moreover, apart from falsification, the system of petty proprietorship leads to wide variations in vinification. Nevertheless, although these difficulties may make fine Burgundy difficult to procure, they are not a criticism of the wine itself. Indeed its supporters declare that the variations, the glorious uncertainty of Burgundy, add to its charm. 'If you want a *standardised* wine,' they say, with a meaning emphasis usually reserved for such words as 'nationalised', 'then drink claret.'

It is a commonplace of wine literature that good claret is easier to come by than fine Burgundy. But is this true nowadays? For claret needs more time to mature than Burgundy, and since wine stocks evaporated in the war years, there has been a great shortage of mature wines. Moreover, owing to the generally disappointing vintages of the 1930s, to find claret at its best one has to go back to the exceptional years in the 1920s. But where are they to be found now? And while the fine post-war Bordeaux has yet to reach its peak (although there is plenty of enjoyable claret about), many of its Burgundian rivals are delicious now, particularly the vintages of the late 1940s.

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Wherein, therefore, lie the positive claims of claret? Its supporters say that, apart from being the least tampered-with of red wines, it has a depth, refinement and delicacy of flavour unknown in the more robust, obvious Côte d'Or wines. They will add that the aroma of fine old claret is without equal, and that the variations from château to château, district to district and vintage to vintage, give claret an interest, an intellectual interest, absent from all other wines. So much is delicacy the touchstone that some purists will only admit the Médoc wines to the highest class. Professor Saintsbury cellared nothing but Médoc and red Graves, and stated that he never cared for St Emilions. The great popularity of St Emilions and Pomerols is relatively recent, and a 'sound' Médoc man would never think of putting Ch. Cheval Blanc or Ch. Pétrus on the same level as the *premiers crus* of Bordeaux – although these two leading wines now fetch top prices.

Another point in favour of claret is that it tends to a longer life than its rival. Although there is no virtue in age itself, there is no doubt that claret upwards of 20 years old can develop extraordinary subtleties of flavour. For while Burgundy matures steadily, and to the end retains something of its initial aroma and flavour, mature claret seems qualitatively different from its rather tannin-ridden youth; and its bouquet is wonderfully perfumed.

The Burgundians, confronted with the often quasi-literary claims for claret, are apt to feel the inferiority of a whisky distiller after dinner in Cognac. And there are two lines of argument upon which they rely. One school insists that nothing can rival the great Côte de Nuits wines, such as Romanée Conti, Grands Echezeaux or Chambertin in vigour, voluptuousness and velvety 'finish'. The other partisans of Burgundy assert that true 'unassisted' wines are every whit as delicate and subtle, and twice as deep, as claret; and they have an incomparable aroma suggestive of wallflowers. But owing to commercialisation – particularly the sugaring said to have been started by the monks of Citeaux in the 18th century – it is not easy to find natural Burgundy.

Fortunately it is impossible to settle the Burgundy-Bordeaux controversy. But the matter cannot be left open in the spirit of laissez-faire, liberal-minded disagreement. It must be put to the test. Partisans of the opposite region must be sought out and provoked into proselytism. The classic bottles are assembled, and the unbeliever is cultivated as assiduously as the Jesuits wooed the Chinese emperors. And, it is to be hoped, with as little success. For to those with a taste for it, disagreement and discussion are not the least agreeable features of wine-drinking.

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A Wine Diary

WHAT sort of vintage has 1957 turned out to be? A leading Bordeaux grower says he will not say until the end of the year; and in a fortnight's time the Hospices de Beaune sale will give the first indication of Burgundy prospects. But what is certain is that the quantity is short and, at a time of scarcity of 'class' wines, prices will be high. Based on current prices, a bottle of Ch. Lafite 1957 will cost not much less than £2 when it is bottled in 1960; its price when ready for drinking in, say, 1970 is another matter.

* * *

Meanwhile the rise in French wine prices has already made many who like a modestly priced bottle to turn to other wine countries. Spanish and Portuguese table wines are probably more in demand in Britain now than since Alicant, Bucellas and Lisbon wines disappeared from our wine lists in the last century. If only so many of them would not masquerade as 'Burgundy', which they are certainly not. In fact they are usually excellent wines, with distinctive aromas, the sweetness of much southern wine, and an ability to go down well with full-flavoured food. White wine amateurs who cannot face the higher prices of German wines have found that the Riesling grape, transplanted into Jugoslavia, makes a deliciously fresh, inexpensive wine, especially if it is slightly chilled. The Riesling also flourishes in Hungary and Czechoslovakia; the former exports to Britain, the latter consumes all its small output. Italian wines would be cheaper if what may be called the Soho public did not expect them to be in the straw-covered *fiaschi*. This usually involves bottling in Italy, expensive freight charges and a duty of about 6s. per litre flask. Incidentally there is a strong case for a lower duty on minor wines; that a *tête de cuvée* Chambertin and a *vins de pays* from Chile, each imported in cask, should both pay 2s. 2d. a bottle duty is absurd.

* * *

One of post-war publishing's phenomena is the extraordinary flow of books on wine. Inevitably they overlap, but a London bookseller tells me that, as with books on cars and cookery, all such works have a collectors' sale. Then there is the new wine-drinking public which wants to be on equal terms with wine merchants and wine waiters. So it is the practical works that sell best. This year appears to be a vintage both for quality and quantity. A Penguin attacks the mass market, and at the other end of the scale comes surely the most lush wine book yet published in Britain: André Simon's *The Noble Grapes and the Great Wines of France* (McGraw-Hill; 5 guineas). This magnum of a tome has 24 colour photographs taken by Percy Hennell, showing French vineyard scenes and, for the first time, says Simon, the exact appearance of the grapes. M. Simon's great work includes detailed information on a vast number of major and minor vineyards. Despite its merits, I am surprised its first edition is 10,000 copies, although only a slice is for sale in Britain.

* * *

Broadly speaking, when people think of port, they have vintage port in mind. Yet I learn from Rupert Croft-Cooke's *Port* (Putnam, 21s.) that less than 5 per cent. of our port imports are vintage wines; the vast majority are rubies, tawnies and whites. Although Mr Croft-Cooke has the occupational failing of many port drinkers in looking over their shoulders at an alleged rosier past, he certainly writes comprehensively about every aspect of this fruity wine. T. E. Carling's *Wine Aristocracy* (Rockliffe, 21s.) claims to be a guide to the 'best wines of the world'. Very much of a reference work, with details of leading growths, of shippers and vintages, it is practical but pedestrian. As might be expected in an American work, the *Esquire Drink Book* (Muller, 30s.) gives up a mere 25 pages out of 300 to wine; nearly 100 are taken up with cocktails and mixed drinks. The best chapter is that on how to cure a hangover.

* * *

How often in a restaurant do you receive the wine ordered? A different vintage from that on the list is usually too small a matter to be mentioned, and if the vintage is right the vineyard may not be. Unluckier still, you may have Pomerol confused with Pommard; and only a pedantic hagiologist would want to distinguish between those three Bordelais saints – Julien, Estephe and Emilion. But my best experience occurred recently in a famous London club. The wine ordered was that most distinguished claret of St Emilion, Cheval Blanc. After more than the usual delay the wine steward arrived with a dark bottle firmly embedded in an ice bucket. White wine, he explained, should always be served cold. This particular White Horse certainly was.

* * *

What should be served cold – and seldom is in Britain – is aperitif sherry. The flabby stuff poured out in overheated bars is a travesty of the fresh crisp drink it should be. A half-hour – no more – in the refrigerator not only makes the sherry more agreeable; it also raises its status by several points. Commonwealth sherries notably benefit from the slight softening that moderate cooling achieves. Dessert sherries are, of course, exempt from this, but they, too, are receptive to special treatment, once very common but apparently dead since the war: ageing in bottle. It is worth putting away a few bottles in a cupboard every year. The only proviso is that the sherry must be a good one, in the £1 plus range: cheap sherries are more likely to deteriorate than improve.

* * *

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German Wines

At Würzburg, the ancient residence of Franconia, this year's German Viticultural Congress took place. For this occasion an impressive collection of German museum-pieces was gathered, including a few well-chosen tools and instruments which gave an indication of the course of technical developments both in viticulture and in the cellar. A handpump, which used to suck the wine from tub to cask and is now only a museum-piece, reminded me of my early days in the cellar, and so did the grape-presses of the 18th century – operated mainly by the pressure of logs. They were still in use at the beginning of this century, and were only gradually replaced by hydraulic presses. These in turn are now disappearing rapidly since a press worked by air-compression, a French invention, has come on the market. This press, easily movable and of comparatively small size, extracts the juice thoroughly without hurting pips or stalks, thus yielding larger yet clean quantities of must, whilst saving a lot of day and night labour. I mention this, because some consumers think wrongly that German wines are more artificial because of modern techniques.

At a time when every industry has tried to profit by the march of science and technique, that of wine could not have afforded to miss its opportunities. The soil, the vine, and climatic conditions are still equally important for successful viticulture. The soil can these days be examined scientifically, and advice be given for its cultivation, in particular for the right types of vine. These the grower purchases from special institutes which eliminate weak plants by 'selection'. The predominant German vines, the Riesling and the Silvaner, each demand a different type of soil: the Riesling, generally speaking, a warm, coarse and gravelly or slaty soil; the Silvaner prefers a loamy calcareous bed. Similar conditions apply to other vines and also to certain crossings. No other vines are permitted and in particular mass-producers such as hybrids are excluded from planting for wine making.

Half a century ago only a few growers understood how to treat their wines in their own cellars. This was considered the task of the trade, who at that time acted on traditional experience supported by tasting and examination for brightness by candle-light. Oxidisation, by exposing the wine to the air, helped by an undefined number of mechanically working isinglass finings, would sooner or later, sometimes after years, end fermentation and achieve a wine bright for bottling. Yet bottling remained a tricky business. Failures were frequent, but if you obtained a good bottling of fine, thoroughly fermented Rhine wine it was worth waiting for. To people who today find such a bottle hard to get, I suggest a well-fermented Rheingau wine, for example, of the 1953 or 1949 vintage (never mind its name) – though it will be hardly obtainable these days under 25s.

However, this is – and always has been – only the taste of a minority. Years ago, the scientists took up Pasteur's discovery that yeast plants were living beings and started to apply this to the treatment of wine. The removal of unsound yeast from the young wine and its replacement by a carefully selected yeast eliminated impure taste and secured a steady fermentation. A new method of fining followed, and the application of all this made it possible to arrive at a method of bottling wine sterile, which thereby diminished the risk of its re-fermentation in bottle.

No doubt all this has led to earlier bottlings, mostly to the advantage, but in a lesser degree to the disadvantage, of the wine. Light wines, and in particular those of very delicate bouquet, will indeed profit from the much reduced exposure to the air. Wines from the Mosel, many from the Nahe, and all ordinary wines from the Rhine, gain nothing by being left in wood too long. Their freshness and crispness form the greater part of their enjoyment, and that is achieved by timely bottling. Such early bottling is not suitable for the bigger and greater growths of the Rhine, and even of the Mosel. These gain in volume and substance in wood, and it is wrong to cut the important process short. Lack of capital and therefore quicker turnover play their part here, as in so many other businesses. This applies to both growers and trade. Today more than in the past they have to consider the economic aspect and also, therefore, to ask for high prices for the best of their products. German viticulture, because of its unique northern situation, requires more labour than that of any other European viticulture, and produces its fine wines less frequently and even then in comparatively small quantities. To leave the grapes in such a climate to achieve even more than ordinary ripeness involves great risks and only receives a blessing in such years as 1949 and 1953.

There has been no comparable vintage since, so these are valuable wines to look for. As, however, they are now scarce, I recommend you to exploit your wine merchant's good knowledge. Do not insist on well-known names; ever so many others are equally good or even better, and probably only less known on account of linguistic difficulty of their name. Do not worry unduly about additional vineyard descriptions – for example, Spätlese, which to my mind should only feature as a description when the late gathering has succeeded in producing very good quality.

The noblest of Rhine wines is that of the smallest district, the Rheingau. From Hochheim to Rüdesheim, on rather less than 6,300 acres, wines of a fruity finesse are grown, unrivalled amongst white wines by their unique bouquet and very distinct character. Besides well-known ones I mention those of Eltville, Erbach (including Marcobrunn), Hattenheim (including the Steinberg), Geisenheim, Kiedrich and Rauenthal. The finer qualities need bottle-age of at least two years, some even longer, to attain their peak. Therefore, if you like a particular wine which you have tasted, I strongly recommend you to buy and bin away a certain quantity in a fairly cool place, out of reach of the sun, but not necessarily in a cellar. My flat has now for years given me and my friends all these pleasures without a cellar.

Almost in contrast to Rhine wines those of the Mosel can be drunk young as they are usually very light wines with plenty of bouquet, which will be better preserved if the wine has had an early bottling. Ordinary Mosel, incidentally, makes as good an apéritif drink as any; and do not refuse wines of the tributaries, the Saar or Ruwer, since often they show even higher qualities in flavour and bouquet than those of the Mosel itself.

Sweetness is not by any means the characteristic of German wines, with the exception of the great Spätlese or Auslese. If you can get yourself accustomed to drink drier wines as ordinary table wines, you will be rewarded by a greater finesse, aroma and flavour which distinguish them from all others. In spite of every modern technique and scientific approach, wine still remains a living being and as such demands respect for its individuality from both producer and consumer.

Alfred Langenbach

Vintners' Choice?

THE intellectual wine merchant re-crossed his long thin legs and looked over to a bookcase where Morton Shand's *Bacchus* was sandwiched between Professor Saintsbury's *Notes on a Cellar-book* and *Bordeaux et Ses Vins*.

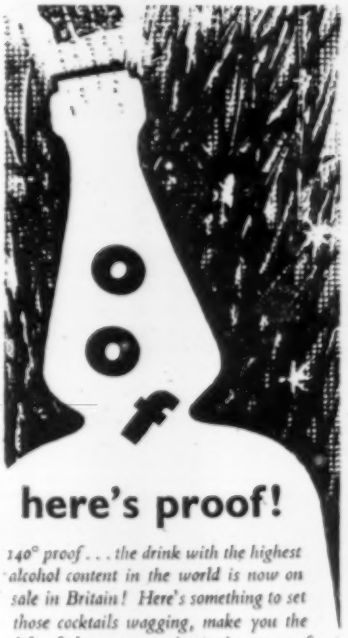
'I wonder,' he said, 'whether or not the keen interest in wine manifested by generations of *literati* has been to the public benefit. I don't mean our friends here, or the semi-professionals,' he continued, waving an El Greco hand towards a row of volumes by Warner Allen, André Simon and others, 'but the novelists and all who earn a living by the pen. But for them, it is doubtful if the Marquis de Lur Saluces would be getting such a big price for his Chateau Yquem, which is not only bad luck on his distinguished neighbours at La Tour Blanche, Climens, Rieussec and elsewhere, but also on the consumers.

'And look,' he went on, 'how the public doggedly insist upon Liebfraumilch—as if it were one of the great hocks instead of a *vin de table*. The salacious appeal of the name (since given a perverted fillip by association with chaste religious orders) once captured some writer's imagination, and now the hock-drinking masses can't think of anything else. Observe my list!' he said, and under the heading of Rhine Wine I saw that there were shown three different shippers' brands of Liebfraumilch as well as one of his own bottling. 'Those I'm obliged to sell, but fortunately a few of my customers can afford to take some interest in the fine ones.' The list made good, if difficult, reading although the prices made me think that there was some truth in the dictum that a good *cheap* hock does not exist.

'And now,' said my host, 'I wonder if by way of an apéritif you would prefer to look at an imperial pint of 1928 Champagne or a Sercial, date unknown, but probably 18th century. They both need drinking.'

I opted for the Madeira. When the wine arrived it had been decanted and was in appearance palish and slightly brown. To use the term 'golden' would demean it since the cheapest sherry is often so described, but it was of a colour, like that of an old gilt frame, that could only have been acquired with age. Made, in all probability, just over 160 years ago, the old Madeira was alive in every faculty and immeasurably better than it could have been at the time of the battle of Waterloo. My friend made quite a convincing effort not to show pride of ownership. And so began some discussion on wine merchants which I paraphrase below.

It was agreed that the genus 'wine merchant' could, for the sake of discussion, be divided roughly into three main categories: the old-established and independent private wine merchant, the multiple wine store and the brewer's off-licence. Admitting the part played by licensed grocers, co-operative wine societies and so forth, it is the independent wine merchant who has possibly the most interesting yet the hardest task to perform. His whole aim and interest is to provide the best according to his own taste and experience and at the same time cater for the more recondite demands. But his success must depend to some extent on having his customers' confidence. His livelihood, therefore, is dependent upon his ability to please the most discerning but not necessarily the most wealthy and, at the same time, show a profit. If he succeeds in all respects save the latter, the octopi of the brewery and the multiple wine store—benign enough in some cases—are waiting to slap a hearty tentacle



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onto him, an alternative which might suit the idle or tired but would be chagrin to the man with real *orgeuil du metier*.

Had a layman been present during our discussion—which with selfish regard for what we were drinking, we would have preferred he were not—and had he suggested in view of the foregoing that the multiple wine companies did not truly serve the public, we should have been obliged to tell him otherwise. We should have pointed out that the octopi, directed as they are by men highly qualified in their profession, are in a position to give extremely good service since by buying good wine in large quantities they are able to equate quality with low cost—'low' being a comparative term in view of the exalted rates of duty imposed on all wines and spirits except, thanks be to Cripps, table wines. If, shaken by this reply coming from an unexpected quarter, he were to look for a scapegoat in the breweries he would have received the answer that, though often guilty—if guilty be the word—of 'power' buying, they are in aggregate the biggest purchasers of wine in the U.K. and, therefore, though tending to pander to the basest demands of public taste, they must be given at least a winsome smile for putting wine before the public at all.

If public scapegoat there must be, then that scapegoat must be the public. Wealth being differently as well as more widely distributed than it was before 1939, thousands travel abroad for holidays or business who would not have done so before the war. It is now happily fashionable for students and others to give bottle-parties on inexpensive wine. Business executives with an expense account, in order to do their clients well, order wine with meals. The whole situation is wide open for the branded article, and the wine trade, which is no more altruistic than publishers or film producers, has not been slow to take advantage. Brand-consciousness is bemoaned by the retail business; but, whereas many retailers fight against it, others have shamelessly capitulated. Brand owners have a thousand unpaid assistants amongst barmen and lazy or ignorant wine butlers, who find it much easier to suggest to the havering customer a name of a wine or spirit that has been widely advertised. The same customer, hearing a name 'known to him', acquiesces with relief.

What is the answer to the vicious spiral? To educate the public? The wine merchant is doing his best. Many senior members of the trade give spare time lecturing to various groups of citizens thirsty for knowledge, and do so without self-advertisement. To educate those who sell to the public? This, too, is being done in various ways. The Wine Trade Club runs an annual course for young aspirants to senior executive positions with prizes in the form of a *bourse de voyage* which enables winners to study in the countries of origin. Directors of multiple stores arrange lectures and tastings for their branch staffs. The Wine and Spirit Trade Association has instituted the Guild of Sommeliers, which arranges lectures, tastings and tours of wine-producing countries. Brand-buying is said by its apologists to be the public's defence against past abuses, but, other than in periods of extreme shortage, abuses are rare. Some merchants are maliciously accused of having a stock of many different labels and only one cask of wine. Such a one could be called a crook, but the man who turns a cask of Bordeaux *rouge* into a recently emptied hogshead of port to 'round it off' could be said to be an intelligent improviser. He who sells as Sauternes a good sweet wine from a neighbouring parish may be ethically a border-line case, but the one who adds glycerine or another wine to a poor Burgundy is a knave. There are rogue priests and crooked lawyers. The wine trade, like the Church of Rome, purifies itself from within.

Our enjoyment of the old Madeira was becoming inhibited by consciousness that we were nearing the bottom of the decanter, when my host said: 'I want to grip every person remotely interested in drinking wine by the lapel and make sure he understands certain facts. Namely, that the British wine merchant is, in general, the most knowledgeable and the least rapacious in the world. That there are more than three thousand châteaux (*clos* and *domaines*) in Bordeaux and, therefore, that it is folly only to buy from about a dozen. That it is false to say that château-bottled claret is better than the same wine bottled by a good merchant in Britain or the Irish Republic, whereas it is true to say that a wine bottled abroad costs more since it comes under a different rate of duty. That the duties imposed by H.M. Customs and Excise are 2s. 2d. per bottle of table wine, 8s. 4d. per bottle of fortified wine (port and sherry) and approximately 24s. per bottle of spirits. That the best brandy in the world is imported from good shippers in Cognac when young and left to mature in cask in a British "wet" (i.e., humid) bond. And that the same brandy, when at its best, is more likely to be pale than dark in colour. That advertising must be done at the expense of the article publicised and that, therefore, the most highly advertised brands of hock, sherry, brandy, whisky, etc., though they maintain a fair standard, are unlikely to be so good as those bottled under a merchant's label. That almost any wine is better than none.'

My inhibitions liberated by wine, I was at last able to interpose a comment. I said 'Amen'.

PETER LUKE

SHELL

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Correspondence

BRITAIN AND THE H-BOMB

SIR,—I have read with great pleasure and almost complete agreement the article by Mr Priestley on Britain's share in nuclear warfare. It has seemed until recently that Britain might make nuclear weapons but eschew tests; this, however, I understand is technically impossible. I deeply regret Mr Bevan's capitulation to the Foreign Office, which follows the precedent of Ernest Bevin and Ramsay MacDonald. If the Labour Party is to offer a substantial alternative to the present government, it will have to find in its ranks some statesman bold enough to ignore the so-called experts, who are blinded by tradition to the apprehension of present facts. There are three issues which British foreign policy has to consider: first, shall there continue to be human beings on this planet; second, shall Soviet Communism dominate the world, or may other systems survive here and there; third, can Britain continue to be regarded as in the same rank as Russia and America among great powers? The government and Mr Bevan agree that the third of these issues is the one which should decide our policy. They do not face the inevitable development that nuclear weapons will, within a very short time, be manufactured by a great many states, and that, when this stage has been reached, if any one of such states is governed by a lunatic (as will probably be the case) the rest of the world will have to submit to him or perish. For this development Britain will have a grave responsibility unless the present British policy is reversed.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Penrhyndeudraeth

SIR,—It is a humiliating, chastening, but inescapable fact that Christian social ethics are today being proclaimed with far more vigour and effect by humanists, agnostics and scientists than by Christian apologists. There could scarcely be a better example of this than J. B. Priestley's article last week on the H-bomb. I believe it to be, from the standpoint of Christian morality, unanswerable. It is certainly magnificent. For this reason I beg you, sir, to have it reprinted in the form of a pamphlet and, if you can afford to be generous, to see that a free copy reaches the desk of every Christian leader in this country. At least then there would be less excuse for the proclamation of a gospel which seems to rely more upon trust in a nuclear deterrent than upon faith in the living God.

TREVOR HUDDLESTON

Mirfield
Yorkshire

[Reprints are available. See the announcement on p 595.—Ed.]

SIR,—In a recent lecture to the Royal United Service Institution I pointed out that there is obviously something absurdly wrong about our defence strategy when we have reached a state of affairs in which the Minister of Defence congratulates us on accepting the harsh and inescapable fact that our defence forces cannot defend the nation but hope to defend themselves so as to be unpleasant to the enemy *after* we have been destroyed.

This fact is not only harsh, it is ludicrous, and it is only inescapable if we assume that violence is the only available foundation upon which to erect a strategy of defence (which of course must include attack). The only reason for assuming that this must be so is that for centuries it has been so. The fact that for centuries men believed the earth to be flat did not make incorrect the discovery that it is round. We are now faced with a defence problem which is not relatively new but absolutely so. We must therefore find a new idea. In a book entitled *Defence in the Nuclear Age*, which Victor Gollancz will publish early next year, I hope that Mr Priestley will discover the chain of reasoning which will show him that what he is asking for is not an exercise in divine irresponsibility but can be a hard-boiled plan of national defence designed to preserve our way of life and do a great deal of damage to ways of life inherently hostile to ours.

Mr Bevan's retreat to pre-nuclear age defence thinking simply shows that he was only emotionally against the H-bomb and did not understand that to abandon nuclear energy for military purposes at this moment in history is the correct strategical move and would give Britain the initiative in the cold war. It also seems quite a moral act, but if morality and expediency coincide so much the better.

STEPHEN KING-HALL

The Athenæum, SW1

SIR,—Your painful, honest, but, as I think, misguided attempt to find an intellectually convincing reason for an H-bomb policy which you feel to be morally wrong cannot go without comment.

Your argument amounts to a compromise, or, indeed, a plea for procrastination. Let Britain make the H-bomb for a little while longer, you say, so that there may be another attempt to get a political settlement. Let us continue to make the bomb so that Mr Bevan can have it to support his powers of persuasion in the councils of NATO. But how *does* one back up an argument with an H-bomb? Do we threaten to use it against the allies with whom we are arguing, or independently against our enemies? It was precisely this emotionally contorted reasoning which Aneurin Bevan denounced in the disarmament debate of July, this year; we then followed his lead and voted against the government specifically because they insisted they could not agree to substantial conventional disarmament until we had secured a satisfactory (to us) settlement of outstanding political problems.

I am not myself a pacifist and I accept that we should contribute a physical deterrent against an international law-breaker—but that does not mean we must make a weapon which, if used, will end all human life. I want to maintain law and order within Britain, but that does not mean that I must agree to hanging as a deterrent. We had a deterrent before the H-bomb was invented. Britain belonged to NATO when the USA had a thermo-nuclear weapon and we had not. Since we detonated an H-bomb I doubt whether Mr Macmillan has influenced NATO policy more than Dr Adenauer.

Nor did your strength-through-H-bomb argument deal with the fact that a steadying, constructive, British influence is most needed, not in dealing directly with the USSR but in building up stability in such areas as the Middle East. We now lack the resources to take the economic initiative in the trouble spots and we are losing the conventional arms which would help deal with a possible bush fire. In both cases—economically and in conventional arms—we are stunted because of this insensate insistence on the capital deterrent.

I have not dealt with the moral issues. Apparently you still accept the moral argument against the H-bomb. But if we think this thing through we surely find that here is a case when, as is not unusual, moral, material (and military) interests coincide.

FRANK BESWICK

House of Commons, SW1

SIR,—While Mr Priestley's article, and your comments on that article, concerning Britain's role in the H-bomb armaments race contain a certain amount of logic, both writers fail to recognise the fact that the hour has *already* passed where Britain can influence either the United States or the small nations of the world by her position on this vital matter. Assuming, as you do, that the present government will not renounce, or threaten to renounce, the use of the H-bomb, then the likelihood of such a policy being implemented rests with the victory of the Labour Party at the next election and the emergence of Mr Bevan as the next foreign secretary. If Mr Bevan then plays your suggested trump card, it will have an effect far different from the restraint on the American policy which you envisage.

It seems to be generally ignored here in Great Britain that the average American views the British Labour Party as being slightly 'pink', given to anti-'American democracy' moves like nationalisation of industries and to coddling up to the Russians. That the British Labour Party is red-tinged has been confirmed in their eyes by the wide publicity given in the American press to the visits to Russia and China by the prominent members of the last Labour government. And of all the Labourites, the American public consider Mr Bevan as the most red-ranting of the lot. The point is that the Americans have a preconceived notion about Mr Bevan which will lead them to expect the worst from him. And as far as 'American official and service opinion' is concerned, it would probably not even wait for the playing of Mr Bevan's trump card, but would immediately begin a quiet withdrawal from this 'unsinkable aircraft carrier', considering it as an untenable position.

And, as the inter-continental ballistic missile becomes more of a reality, the value of Britain as an anti-Russian base becomes less important. So too, in the eyes of the American military planners, will the importance of the air and short-range missile bases in the other NATO nations diminish with time. In effect, Britain's withdrawal from the H-bomb game will have little effect on the current American armaments policy. It will only serve to alienate the British from the American peoples. And it will not prevent a 'neutral' Britain from being obliterated in the event that the two mad giants start thrashing at each other with nuclear weapons.

ARNOLD ROE

66 Loudoun Road, NW8

SIR,—You state that 'Britain, it seems to us, has no option but to contract out of the whole business and accept, with all the difficulties it involves, the position not very different from that of a Scandinavian power', thereby inferring that in such circumstances our position would be worsened.

If we could cut adrift from the present arms race what could we not do to improve our standard of living, to build schools and hospitals and to make our National Health Service all it might be. What are the difficulties to which you refer and how could they be resolved? For my part I should like nothing better than a neutrality pact with Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries, accepting the fact that we are no longer a first-class power. If we maintain our present attitude we shall be ruined whether we have atomic war or not. Why not enjoy a decent standard of living even if it lasts only a few years?

F. W. GILDER

Greenacre
Barton-on-Sea

SIR,—I have only one criticism to make of Mr Priestley's admirable contribution to your last issue, and only one of your related leading article. Neither Mr Priestley nor you face the logical conclusions of your own attitude. Mr Priestley would have us abandon nuclear weapons but none-the-less be prepared to defend ourselves if necessary. Defend, pray, with what? With obsolete aircraft, tanks and automatic small-arms? I am reminded of the occasion, 15 years ago, when I and others were cast in the role of advanced screen against possible Japanese attack from the Bay of Bengal, on horseback and armed with swords! Had the occasion arisen we would doubtless have attempted to hold the invasion at the sword's point, and we might even have done some good, since behind us regular forces would have been building up with proper equipment. But to send conventionally armed troops against an invader, using tactical atomic weapons, weapons which were never to be matched, would not be to barter their lives against the possiblity of ultimate military success, but merely to ensure that ultimate defeat would be accompanied by the maximum death and destruction. No! If we abandon nuclear weapons it will be madness to fight at all.

The argument of your leader similarly fails to pursue to its end a proposition you do not hesitate to enumerate, namely that a full-scale nuclear war could end our civilisation. If this is really so the

avoidance of war must be given a priority so high that no possible combination of other objectives could displace it; and the only dead sure way of avoiding war is refusal to fight. It is irrelevant in this context to remind ourselves of the Greeks at Marathon, or even the British in 1940. War has changed, not merely developed with advancing technology, but completely changed, and it is no longer—practical. A refusal to engage in it, notified in advance, would not be national cowardice but international realism, and its effect upon international tensions would surely be of greater value than the limited ends you set out as perhaps achievable by staying a nuclear power and playing the Last Trump. Was the irony intentional?

R. L. C. FOOTTIT

Parrixbourne
Near Canterbury

TWO STANDARDS OF TREATMENT

SIR,—You say that statistics published by the Medical Research Council's Social Medicine Unit strikingly confirms the existence of a double standard of treatment in the hospital service because the mortality for operations for acute appendicitis or perforated peptic ulcer or for enlargement of the prostate gland is higher in non-teaching hospitals than in teaching hospitals. You then conclude that this difference is due to better staffing and facilities provided at the teaching hospitals.

There is a little truth in what you say, but, as a doctor who has worked in both types of hospitals, I would like to point out that you have taken no account of the very well-recognised difference between the type of patient who is admitted to the two kinds of hospitals. For example, most of the teaching hospitals are situated in densely-populated areas and there is less delay in bringing emergency cases to hospital in such areas than in the more widely-scattered areas which many of the non-teaching hospitals serve. The most important cause of increased mortality in the types of disease mentioned is delay in treatment, and every hour counts. Another very important factor is that the teaching hospitals have less beds available for emergencies, as a rule, than the big ex-municipal or ex-County Council hospitals, and therefore general practitioners send more of their emergency cases to non-teaching hospitals. On the other hand, teaching hospitals receive a lot of emergency patients who collapse in public places or who make their own way to hospital. The outlook of these patients is bound to be much better than that of patients who become ill at home and who may delay for a long time before sending for their general practitioner.

It is therefore clear that, although better staffing and facilities may account for some of the better results in teaching hospitals, the main reason for the difference lies in the selection of patients who are admitted to the two kinds of hospitals.

SURGEON

SIR,—You say that the chances of a patient suffering from peritonitis following appendicitis are twice as good in a teaching hospital as they are in a non-teaching one. That just isn't true. If you take another look at the figures you use, you will observe that in non-teaching hospitals 93.4 per cent of patients recover from this very serious illness, while in teaching hospitals the figure is 96.7 per cent. An improvement certainly, but in view of their advantages in terms of staff and equipment, hardly a large one. The same is true of the other examples you give.

In short, your comment seems to show that the non-teaching hospitals are maintaining their standards extraordinarily well in the face of very great difficulties.

ROBERT A. SANDOW

41 Landsdowne Road
Chingford

[Our phrase was ambiguous. Quite simply, a death rate of 6.6 per 100 is twice a rate of 3.3 per 100.—ED.]

BUYING FOREIGN BOOKS

SIR,—Instead of the old, laborious and slow method of getting permission from exchange control to buy a book abroad worth probably no more than a £1, I think your readers will be interested to know that there exists the Unesco Book Coupon Scheme whereby institutions and individual people can purchase publications, photocopies, art reproductions, maps, etc., from other countries. Anyone here who wishes to make a purchase from abroad, provided it is for an educational, scientific or cultural purpose, can buy Unesco Coupons from the United Nations Association, the UK distributing agent, and send them to the foreign supplier as payment. Many students have been using the Scheme to help them with their studies; libraries, schools and universities have found it useful in obtaining books and periodicals published abroad; a number of people from isolated parts of the Commonwealth are using the Coupons to pay for further education courses. The Scheme does, of course, work in reverse and people in other countries are ordering and paying for a large number of British books in this way.

If any of your readers want to know more about the Unesco Coupon Scheme and how it operates perhaps they would like to write to the United Nations Association, 5 Charles Street, London, W1, and further information will gladly be sent to them.

DAVID ENNALS
Secretary

United Nations Association

DAMAGED GOODS

SIR,—I received compensation from the PO for two bottles of Pineau des Charentes broken out of six sent from France last year. I am not sure if the parcel was even registered. Mr Strachan seems therefore to have been badly treated. There was this small difference—I was able to prove that the damage occurred between Sutton Coldfield Customs depot and my address; but the letter he quotes would seem to exclude any compensation, wherever the damage occurs.

A. W. THOMAS

Cleve Hill
Barby

ADVERTISERS AND THE PRESS

SIR,—In your issue of 26 October Mr Francis Williams makes serious allegations (in the case of Mr Muggeridge and the *Sunday Dispatch*) against 'big advertising agents'.

You and your readers should be made aware that these allegations are entirely untrue. I challenge Mr Williams to produce a single piece of evidence to support his damaging statement. Not only in the specific circumstances quoted by Mr Williams, but in principle, at all times the 'big advertising agents' make very sure they do *not* bring any pressure to bear editorially with the press. Mr Williams and your readers will know that this fact emerged very clearly from the report of the Royal Commission on the Press.

J. P. O'CONNOR
Director

Institute of Practitioners in Advertising,
44 Belgrave Square, SW1

[Francis Williams deals with this letter in Fleet Street Notebook on p. 602.—ED.]

LES TEMPS MODERNES

SIR,—In your issue of 14 September, Alexander Werth wrote a letter commenting on *Esprit* and *Les Temps Modernes*, suggesting that the former had a print of 15,000, three times the circulation of *Les Temps Modernes*. I wish to correct his error. The circulation of this journal is 10,000 copies on normal occasions, and up to 15,000 for special issues. These figures can easily be verified, and I would happily have given them to Mr Werth if he had asked me.

MARCEL PÉJU

Les Temps Modernes
30 Rue de l'Université
Paris, 7e

ADENAUER'S SUBURBIA

SIR,—Having lived in Hamburg for 26 years, and in St. Pancras for ten, I tremendously enjoyed Anthony Carson's description of Dr Adenauer's Suburbia, including that of Hamburg's main railway station, 'the new German world, built to astound and subjugate the wild, unruly traveller from the stations of London, Barcelona or Paris.'

There is only one tiny flaw in it: Hamburg's *Hauptbahnhof* was built half a century ago and put into full operation in 1906. Compared with what it was like in the days of the Weimar Republic, before 1933, it is distinctly shabby these days.

BENJAMIN CARR

145 Cotswold Gardens, NW2

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

The Faith of Bertrand Russell

ONE of the stories told in my day at Cambridge of Dr Butler, the famous Master of Trinity, was that he began an address to a congregation of college servants (an annual occasion known as the 'Bedders Sermon') in the following terms: 'The ontological argument for the Deity has, I grant you, somewhat fallen into desuetude in recent years under the influence of Teutonic criticism'. Today his audience would no doubt also agree that the arguments from design and natural law and indeed all the array of traditional proofs of God's existence have fallen into desuetude under the influence of the scientific habit of mind. We no longer think of a world wound up like a watch, or argue that because the stars hold their predestined courses a wise and good God presides over our lives. Anthropomorphic arguments for the deity were effectively ridiculed even before the concept of evolution changed the context of the debate.

Bertrand Russell remarks that the Catholic claim to prove the existence of God by reason was an answer to the sceptic's habit of pretending to rescue orthodox absurdities by saying that they must be true in spite of their absurdity, since they are part of divine revelation. What is entailed in the metaphysical proof of God's existence can be learnt from the lengthy debate between Bertrand Russell and Father F. C. Copleston, S.J., in this collection of Russell's more blasphemous writings*. The fact that this argument took place on the Third Programme is much to the BBC's credit, though it cannot be held to infringe the BBC rule that nothing may be said to weaken Christian faith, since the arguments are far too abstruse to be appreciated by ordinary listeners. No one will dispute Russell's statement that men's faith in God is not in fact derived from such arguments.

To be a Christian, Russell says, one must at least believe both in God and in immortality. He is as clear in his rejection of the second as of the first, though he concedes that he may be compelled to change his mind if scientific evidence for some form of survival after death is forthcoming. Today belief in immortality does not depend on evidence; even more than a belief in the Deity, fear would seem to be the most persuasive impulse. What exactly orthodoxy means by a resurrection I have often tried to understand. Those who claim to believe in the resurrection of the body seldom, when pressed, seriously hold that our physical bodies will be renewed from decomposed matter, and a spiritual body always appears to me to be a contradiction in terms. Spirit is not matter, but I can never conceive of the spirit of anyone of whom I'm fond detached from the smile and the brain through which I recognize it. The desire not to be snuffed out like a candle and to rejoin one's friends in another life is strong and natural. And yet I ask myself whether I really wish to spend an eternity in any surroundings. I conclude that I do not. When I inquire of others who profess a belief in immortality I am forced to the conclusion that their faith is usually a comforting assumption and not a practical confidence such as they have that the 10.45 train from Euston will take them to Manchester. If they really believed in the next world in this everyday sense, would it not affect their thoughts and their conduct at least as much as a doctor's prescription for avoiding an early and painful death? I am confirmed in this view by the rare example of my paternal grandfather who was genuinely convinced that he was not amongst the elect and who therefore, very logically, died a melancholic.

Russell adds two other forms of provocative unorthodoxy. He disagrees with many rationalists who hold that Jesus Christ was supremely great in wisdom and character. Insisting on his duty to use his brains even when studying the Gospels, he decides that Christ, like other men, was occasionally guilty of outbursts of bad temper and that many of his recorded sayings are only explicable on the assumption that he believed in an early Second Coming and cataclysmic end of the world. Much of his moral teaching was a restatement of doctrines that are to be found in earlier moralists, even though men before him had not acted on the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount any more than they have since. He places Christ high among the religious teachers of the world, but prefers Socrates.

Russell's further heresy is his belief that the influence of the Church has been wholly bad. Here he is as uncompromising as Gibbon. Religious systems which are built round a belief that they embody final truth inevitably become vicious and intolerant. Even Buddhism, a non-proselytising religion, has been cruel and oppressive in Tibet, while its control was absolute. Communism is oppressive and reactionary for the same reasons in spite of its support of scientific inquiry. Indeed, in the Communist world the scientists are the priesthood of an established and persecuting faith. Organised religion, Russell insists, is based on fear, conceit and hatred. Fear of the unknown makes us desire to have a Big Brother to look after us. Russell used this analogy many years ago. There is no reason to think he would now refuse its application to God, because it has since been applied to Stalin.

The second human impulse embodied in religion, he says, is conceit; the absurd anthropocentric view that somehow the universe must have been constructed for human benefit. The third motive is hatred, rationalised in righteous anger to justify the common impulse to condemn, torture and destroy people who hold contrary or disturbing opinions. The history of the Church wherever it has had secular power provides innumerable illustrations. Russell chooses amongst other examples clerical doctrine on matters of sex. What could be more cruel, wicked and hypocritical than to compel a woman to remain tied to a husband who insists on making her the mother of syphilitic children?

The Inquisition may be dead in the West, but Russell has himself experience, particularly in the United States, of the continued existence of the inquisitorial spirit. Mr Paul Edwards, who edited this collection of Russell's writings on religion, has added as an appendix the story of how, during the war, he was prevented from teaching at the College of the City of New York. It is really a frightening story of hatred, distortion and persecution; it is good to remember that many of Russell's most eminent contemporaries in the United States supported him, feeling, as John Dewey said, that 'as Americans we can only blush with shame for this scar on our repute for fair play'.

Russell is, of course, aware that to this charge of rationalising evil motives the Church could reply that hatred and fear are essential human characteristics, and that the best you can do is to direct them into comparatively harmless channels so that, for instance, it 'attempts to render concupiscence innocuous by confining it within the bounds of matrimony. So it may be said, if mankind must inevitably feel hatred it is better to direct this hatred against those who are really harmful, and this is precisely what the Church does by its conception of righteousness'. To this Russell replies that the Church's conception of righteousness has retarded the full use of the intelligence and constantly led to the persecution of those who are now universally admitted to have been good men, while maintaining in places of power wicked men, provided they have been orthodox. Far more important, however, he says, is the fact that we now know how fear and hatred can be 'almost wholly eliminated from human nature by educational, economic and political reforms'. The right early training, the absence of violent punishment, an environment of love, and a complete frankness instead of the usual taboos – these can rid us of fear and hatred. 'The knowledge exists by which universal happiness can be secured; the chief obstacle to its utilisation for that purpose is the teaching of religion.'

This passage, which reads like 1789, was written in 1930, when Russell could expect a large percentage of educated listeners still to believe in the perfectibility of man. The words today read oddly. It has not been proved that they are untrue, but they display a confidence in human reason and in the ultimately beneficent results of scientific knowledge which has completely gone from a world in which science seems to be leading us either to physical destruction or to totalitarian slavery. Basically it is this disillusion with the religion of progress – for three centuries the inspiring faith of the Protestant West – that is driving young men and women back towards religion. Very seldom, I think, have they any settled faith in religious dogmas, but they are unable to face the loneliness and aridity of the gospel of science. If they accept ecclesiastical rule, it is because they want to cease questioning; oppressed with a sense of guilt it is simpler to accept original sin and authoritative forgiveness than to pursue the long inquiry into the possibilities of salvation by education; if the world is coming to an end without rhyme or reason as Russell prophesied in these early essays, or is about to be made into a desert as the Russell of 1957 fears, then they seek a personal religion to give them inner com-

* *Why I am not a Christian.* By BERTRAND RUSSELL. *Allen & Unwin.* 16s.

H. E.
BATES

SUGAR FOR THE HORSE

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NEWS CHRONICLE 13/6

MICHAEL JOSEPH

fort. Therefore, though they do not believe, they desire to believe, and, as I see more clearly every day, there is no irrationality that the will to believe cannot overcome.

There is one more essay which I wish Bertrand Russell would write. He remains, as always, a passionate moralist, hating cruelty and ready to suffer rather than surrender one iota of the truth as he sees it. He obeys the Protestant commandment: 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil'. It seems to me that he should explain more fully the justification for his humanist faith which goes beyond the calculations of utility. Theologians waste their time on the Origin of Evil; the origin and justification of a faith not in God, but in Good, is to me a more interesting question.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

The Two of You

When you confront that you to whom all hopes,
All tragedies and failures you confess,
Tell her you understand how she must queen it
Stateless, unsubjected, the calm and charm
That grow from her own heart her only crown,
And her true prince and only homager
Eyeless and dumb, the death-mask of a poet.
Tell her you think her life out with his legends.
Therefore she owes you, acting out your own,
Some witchery or mystery to subdue
The clumsy-footed, large-as-life usurper
Lest he suspect that you suspect his title.
Stare you at you, acting the menial life
Loyal to the madness underneath the mask.

JAMES REEVES

Little Old Blitz

The Blitz. By CONSTANTINE FITZ GIBBON. With drawings by HENRY MOORE. *Wingate.* 25*s.*

It brought everyone in; it cured far more than it killed; it made us, for a while, stretch out to others and see with fresh eyes.

Mr Fitz Gibbon sets off with a rapid survey of bombardment from the air; it seems that during the siege of Venice in 1849 balloons carrying bombs with time fuses were sent to drift over the city. But the trouble with this sort of start is that the Blitz itself can be only introductory; it was followed by others, far worse, and then Hiroshima; and when this narrative ends in May 1941, it does no more than break off. The Blitz was only an incident. Twenty thousand people were killed in London, and the figure is not hideously more than the combined mortality from, say, road accidents and influenza in any year.

Even as we read the imagination lunges ahead into what it may be like next time; not much room for humour, and flowers won't grow out of the ruins. In fact, despite the acres of dilapidation still here to attract a curious sightseer, the Blitz has shrunk away into the far distance. Mr Fitz Gibbon's narrative or *collage* of narratives – the first to give a general picture – revives it for those who lived through and supplies a documentary impression for those younger or absent. Everyone had his own Blitz which was different from the people's next door. Some sought the Tube and others Jane Austen; some played chess, others hoses from hundred-foot ladders; some sat in water up to the ankles in park trenches, waiting for an ambulance or a cup of tea; some preferred the shelter get-together, others the lonely bed; and some, of course, copped it. Unless you were unlucky – and the chances were enormously against it – it wasn't such a bad time. There were the moonlight nights revealing a new and sometimes beautiful London, equality of a kind, friendliness and the pursuit of classics, thundering drama, the pleasure of being there next day to joke about Haw-Haw, review *Four Quartets*, or smoke a cigarette from under the counter. Mr Fitz Gibbon refers to the consolations, but since he was soldiering himself, he has had to rely on collating the experience of others, mostly concerned in the bigger incidents or actively engaged. He manages to cover most things, from bomb-disposal nerves to the seven-hour train journey from the suburbs; some of these accounts have a Mayhew quality.

A warden was chased by a dustbin lid. A fireman negligently took out his teeth and held them under the hose, which caught them away snapping into the blaze. The Lea burnt blue with gin. Pigeons wheeled round and round all night over the City, caught in a false dawn. There is an extraordinary description of a man clinging to the kerb in a 15-second blast from a landmine off Langham Place, and being at last slowly levitated across the pavement. Survivors come speechless out of bombed arches. With 'chandeliers' lighting the scene a bus begins to prance as the bombs fall around; the driver finds himself lying in a shop doorway. The Windmill performance goes on with an audience of one; when it's over he asks why all the others suddenly left, and they have some difficulty in explaining – he's deaf. The points of view, tragic, bright, confused, patient, and merely odd, mount up. This is a wider panorama of those gashes in a black-out than we have known before. The big happenings are seen whole – the initial hammer blows on dockland, the bonfire night round St. Paul's – and various incidents are pin-pointed. Those who survived the two bombs that dived into the Café de Paris give a brilliantly macabre account of their night out: the Negro band in a room modelled from the *Titanic*, the coloured flame rings, the dead waiter with the champagne bottle pouring, figures groping through the cotton-wool air, others already slinking round after pillage, rows of dead dolls in their beautiful dresses laid on the pavement, and the uncertain crowd in the street clapping survivors – the theatrical appeal is irresistible. Henry Moore's shelter drawings lift the whole thing into eternity.

And then with the all-clear on May 11, 1941, Mr Fitz Gibbon closes down. More voices and fewer afterthoughts would have made this an even better book; after all, millions came through, and their hour won't be repeated.

G. W. STONIER

Hale and Hearty

Talking of Books. By OLIVER EDWARDS. *Heinemann.* 21*s.*

This full-length portrait – Oliver, warts and all – confirms an impression gained from weekly glimpses of *The Times* book page: wide and enthusiastic reading makes a poor substitute for critical insight. The lack of penetration in these essays is everywhere apparent – in the unbuttoned fireside chatter ('Generations of French writers have wrestled with Milton. What Englishman can claim to have given us the authentic Dante? And beyond them all, there is Homer, baffling every century, every nation, every language'); in the empty commendations ('It [*Ravenshoe*] 'is Henry Kingsley's masterpiece. A wholly English book – the Boat Race and the Derby are

both in it for good measure – it is crammed with authentic people and exciting incidents'); in the *belles-lettres* posturings ('What is the secret of Goethe's fascination and charm?'); in the fatuities ('To persevere with Goethe needs the stamina of youth. Heine is essentially the author for middle-age, Marlowe is for inexperience, Shakespeare for mellowness'); in the fumblings with modern literature ('No one would pretend to put Lawrence and Carlyle in the same class, but justice is a classless affair. Lawrence was a not inconsiderable figure in the history of English writing in the first half of this century – admittedly a rather poor period . . .').

Literary journalism of this kind seems to me to serve no purpose. It is amateurish, dully written, and without popular flair. It does not even set out – appearing in *The Times*, could it dare to set out? – to introduce ignorant people, or top people, to some good books. It is incoherent in its standards, so that we are told on the one hand that Arnold Bennett's 'creative gift was probably small', and on the other that 'his characterisation was true, and his invention never flagged'. This makes no sense. And the fact that Oliver Edwards lists *Women in Love* in one place among twelve 'memorable or significant novels' of the last half-century (he loves compiling lists of books and teams of authors), but in a second essay does not include *Women in Love* among the 'baggage' with which poor Lawrence is 'to go to Posterity', suggests he does not know his own mind.

Occasionally a lighter vein is attempted, as in the essay which begins: 'I do not know what Dr Johnson would have said to Johnnie Ray. . . .' Oliver Edwards withdraws, and the stage is taken by an old-fashioned comic turn (Messrs Hale and Hearty?) of honest purpose and uncertain touch. Such moments afford welcome relief from the literary small-talk which this volume is chiefly concerned to offer, and which I feel disinclined, for several reasons, to call literary criticism. Among these reasons, one is worth singling out for the light it throws on Oliver Edwards's attitude to his weekly task. Welcoming the film of *Moby Dick*, he says: 'Anything that can induce any body of new readers to take up a masterpiece is valuable. The introduction once made, the masterpiece will do the rest.' If it were true that masterpieces 'did the rest', then literary criticism would be the simplest of trades and one would have no quarrel with Oliver Edwards except over his failure (already noted) to effect the right introduction. But it is not true.

JOHN JONES

Old Land, New Face

Turkestan Alive. By BASIL DAVIDSON. *Cape.* 25*s.*

Until recently Sinkiang (Chinese Turkestan) was one of the most inaccessible parts of the inhabited world; for the Western traveller it probably still is. Two or three decades ago it could be reached only on foot or by animal transport. Access from China proper involved a formidable journey of many weeks across the Gobi Desert. The journey to Kashgar from railhead in India took two months. Along the main trade route, through Ladakh, it involved weeks of travel through entirely uninhabited country, the crossing of several glaciers and of many passes, 17,000 and 18,000 feet high. Only from Russian Turkestan was the approach relatively easy. Now, however, air transport, the opening of motor roads across the desert from Kansu and within the Province itself, have brought all parts within easy reach of China.

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"We are given the feeling that here is a minor Victorian masterpiece that we had somehow missed." GUY MCCRONE (*Glasgow Herald*).

"Cousin Harriet adds to its other merits deep background and thoroughly well-built plot." ELIZABETH BOWEN (*Tatler*).

"A beautifully constructed story, neatly characterized and altogether credible. Miss Austen would have found much to approve and little to criticize in Lady Harriet Waveney. *The Times.*

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widely in Sinkiang. From some of these, such as Sir Aurel Stein and Von Le Coq, we have learnt much of its ancient history. The consular post, which the British Indian Government maintained for sixty years in Kashgar to foster trade across the southern passes, provided a continuous record of its more recent past. Both have been exceedingly turbulent. But in spite of this Sinkiang remained a cultural backwater, almost immune from the flood of change in the world outside. Even as recently as 1948 the life of its people, whether the Uighurs (Turkis) of the oases or the mountain nomads, was essentially the same as it was in the time of Marco Polo. Therein lay much of the charm of this 'antique land' which has made such a profound impression upon Western travellers who may perhaps be excused their apprehension at the prospect of the revolutionary changes which would certainly follow the advent of Chinese Communism in 1949.

Mr Basil Davidson's account of present conditions in Sinkiang and of the changes implemented during the first seven years of the new regime is of very great interest to all who are anxiously watching the development of Communism in China; for the way in which they deal with their minorities is perhaps the best guide to the integrity and capacity of the new rulers. His visit to the Province lasted only six weeks; he was able to cover a great deal of ground, while his tenacity, and his sense of the importance of his quest, enabled him to make full use of his time. His information was gathered from scores of interviews and he was at great pains to ensure that these should be with as wide a diversity of people as possible.

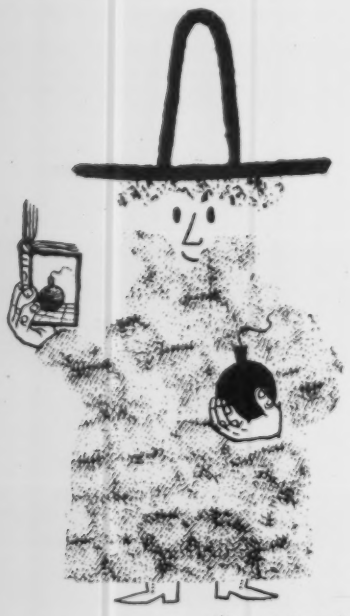
Mr Davidson would, I believe, be the first to admit that information obtained in such circumstances is liable to be tainted. Even under the most benevolent dictatorship people are not likely to air their grievances to a foreign stranger. For instance it would be surprising to find a Uighur farmer or a Kirghiz herdsman voicing 'separatist' views, or expressing displeasure at the prospect of the importation of several million Chinese settlers; though it is hard to believe that these sentiments are not strongly felt by certain sections of the community. At the same time it might be tempting to curry official favour by exaggerating the horrors of past conditions and the benefits of the present. There is no way of checking the validity of statements about the latter; but regarding past conditions and events we may compare the evidence presented to Mr Davidson with the views of contemporary foreign observers, and here we find some discrepancies. For example, he was given the impression that before 1949 the people of the southern oases had been living in conditions of abject poverty, misery and squalor. I fancy that this would surprise most of those who were well acquainted with the country in those days. Judged by Asiatic standards, and indeed compared with some European communities, the peasants were for the most part well clothed, food shortages were comparatively rare, there was little evidence of malnutrition and there was a marked absence of squalor.

It is difficult, too, to escape the impression that strenuous efforts have been made to play down Soviet complicity in and responsibility for Sheng Shih-Tsai's 'reign of terror' in the 1930s. There is overwhelming contemporary evidence for this and for the belief that Sheng was a mere puppet, taking his orders from Moscow. It was only at the end of 1941 and in 1942, when the Soviet Union was reeling under the staggering blows of the Wehrmacht and when he might well have believed in the imminent downfall of Soviet power, that Sheng performed his dramatic *volte-face* and placed the Province under the control of the Kuomintang for the first time since the Chinese Revolution in 1911. The widespread detestation of Communism kindled by Sheng's regime would provide a powerful motive for this reorientation of popular thought about its basis.

But it is with the present that Mr Davidson is mainly concerned, and of this, even allowing for the probable concealment from him of the whole truth, he presents an encouraging and convincing picture. The figures he quotes of increased agricultural yields, of new land brought under cultivation, of increased education and the development of medical services, all these are very impressive; but his description of the prevailing atmosphere of hope and freedom from oppression is still more telling. He has succeeded in conveying the impression, at least to one sceptical reader, that the Chinese Communists have approached their task in Sinkiang with tact and patience and liberal foresight, and that they have been careful to avoid the tragic blunders of their predecessors in Soviet Central Asia. Incidentally there seems to be some evidence that the age-old rivalry between Russia and China for domination over Sinkiang, which apparently continued until 1953 and which was probably the cause of much of the friction between the two Communist powers, ceased with the death of Stalin, and that at last China has unhampered control of her remote Province.

It is clear that, despite the brevity of his visit, Mr Davidson came under the spell of this strange land for, with some fine descriptive writing, he succeeds in conveying something of its unique quality. Perhaps we may take it as an encouraging sign that, after seven years of revolutionary change, Sinkiang still has the power to charm.

ERIC SHIPTON



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One More Counterblast

The Business of War. By MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN KENNEDY. *Hutchinson.* 25*s.*

Last year, *The Turn of the Tide* set a precedent in war memoirs – and apparently also began a new series. With what would have been punished as a gross violation of security if any member of his staff had attempted it, Lord Alanbrooke kept a very secret and fairly indiscreet war diary for his wife's private eye. After the war he spent some time unsuccessfuly editing and rewriting his manuscript. Then the enterprising Messrs. Collins intervened with a handsome offer to Lord Alanbrooke if he would put the material into the expert hands of Sir Arthur Bryant. Sir Arthur's task was to counter Sir Winston's highly personal version of history and selection of documents with another version, composed with equal and opposite partiality, on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff.

The Turn of the Tide, when it was published, however, proved something of a disappointment. The amount of new information it added to Sir Winston's history was far less than had been suggested in the immense promotion campaign; and I was by no means the only reviewer who felt that the censored and highly selected indiscretions with which it was spiced left a nasty smell.

These criticisms apply, though not nearly so strongly, to *The Business of War* – another personal narrative, written up for another brass-hat by another professional. This time Bernard Fergusson has had access to the papers which Sir John Kennedy threw from time to time into a steel box while he was Director of Military Operations. Sir John, in the intervals of governing Southern Rhodesia, actually composed his own book, and we are told that Fergusson's job was to rewrite the whole manuscript, after cutting out about half the original text, including everything painful or wounding. However, he has followed Sir Arthur Bryant's example. A sufficient amount of juicy anecdotes and contemporary backbiting is retained to make certain that *The Business of War* is good business in peacetime too.

Readers should be warned that Brigadier Fergusson has composed Sir John Kennedy's memoirs strictly as an adjunct to *The Turn of the Tide* and Sir Winston's *Second World War*. At first I was puzzled to note that, whereas the narrative is well-nigh continuous from Dunkirk until Pearl Harbour, the second half has been so savagely edited that it now consists of scraps and pieces. The explanation of this contrast emerges when we remember that Alanbrooke took over as Chief of the Imperial General Staff in November, 1941. For the previous period his war diaries fail to provide the Service Chiefs' answer to Churchill's war memoirs. Who could fill in the gap? Sir Dudley Pound and Sir John Dill are both dead and Lord Portal is an airman, with no grudge against Sir Winston. So the choice fell on the DMO, who prepared the staff papers for Sir John Dill, attended the Chiefs of Staff in his absence and knew the tragic triangular relationship between Dill, Wavell and Churchill during the Greek disaster.

Apart from finally confirming that Hore-Belisha was removed from the War Office as the result of a conspiracy of the brass-hats, Sir John Kennedy provides very little new factual material about the conduct of the war. The chief value of his book is the picture it paints of the relationship between Dill and Wavell on the one side and Sir Winston on the other. Both these two distinguished soldiers were far too gentlemanly to be a match for Churchill. It has always been some-

thing of a puzzle why on earth they gave their military approval to the political gamble of the Greek campaign. In *The Business of War* we see exactly how they were seduced by the Premier's fervid imagination and we listen to them solemnly sanctioning the campaign without ever once making a strictly military appreciation of its chances. First of all they are persuaded to give up the military certainty of capturing Tripoli for the political gamble of trying to build a Balkan front. Then Dill and Eden are sent out to study the situation on the spot with Wavell and gradually drift into acceptance of intervention. The ironical climax is reached when the three of them are all out in Cairo, irrevocably committed to a gamble which by now is certain to fail. At this moment Churchill cabled them, offering to call the campaign off unless they could assure him that it was militarily sound. They gave the assurance and doomed yet another British army to evacuation, within a matter of days.

As far as I can see, Sir John Kennedy's version of this story confirms, down to the smallest detail, Sir Winston's account. Sir John himself was an outspoken opponent of the Greek adventure from the start to the bitter end; and, though he tries to mitigate their offence, he admits that the real criminals were Dill, Wavell and Eden, who permitted their dislike of letting the Greeks down and their fear of being called defeatists by Churchill to distort their judgment of the situation. Instead of doing their duty by puncturing Sir Winston's political and military illusions, they combined to inflate them still further. The result of their woeful weakness of character would have been our total elimination from the Middle East – if Hitler had not saved us by attacking Russia.

It is certainly useful to have this appalling story retold from the memories of a soldier whose admiration for Dill was equalled by his contempt for Churchill's strategic capacities. Kennedy attributes our poor showing against the Germans until El Alamein to the inadequate training and equipment of the British Army and Sir Winston's determination to attack far too often far too soon. But his own book confirms that the inadequacy of our generalship and staff-work had at least as much to do with it. If Sir John and his colleagues had the right to be exasperated at the time consumed on planning the ridiculous operations Sir Winston dreamed up, Sir Winston was equally justified when he constantly threatened to have them all shot for blimpish incompetence.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

New Novels

March the Ninth. By R. C. HUTCHINSON. *Bles.* 15*s.*

The Sword of Pleasure. By PETER GREEN. *Murray.* 16*s.*

One Small Boy. By BILL NAUGHTON. *MacGibbon & Kee.* 18*s.*

Best Seller. By WILLIAM MURRAY. *Longmans.* 15*s.*

March the Ninth I put at the head of the list in deference to its author's great reputation. It is the current choice of the Book Society, and I have no doubt it will be much admired. Mr Hutchinson is exploring the problems of loyalty and guilt, retribution and atonement, and he does so in terms of the novel of action. His hero and narrator, Eugen Reichenbach, is a Viennese surgeon who, as a refugee from Nazism, has become an American citizen: when the novel opens, he has left his job at the Yale Medical School to join an international commission in Trieste in 1947. A chance encounter with an old Viennese friend

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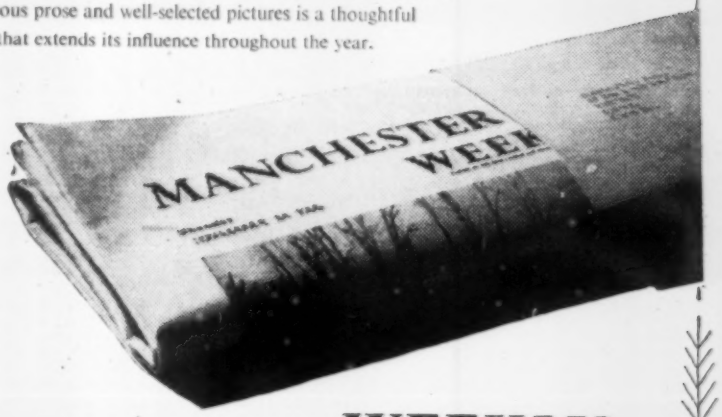

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Victor Gollancz

leads him illegally to enter Jugoslavia to treat a wounded man who proves to be a Nazi general on the run from the trials at Nuremburg. From then on, Reichenbach is more and more implicated in the attempts of General Zempelmark and his family to escape from justice, until the time comes when Zempelmark, captured by former Partisans, has to face secret trial in the village whose menfolk he has massacred some years before, in reprisal for an attack on his troops by Tito's guerillas.

A highly serious theme, illustrated in an admirably contrived and beautifully composed story: why, then, did it seem to me merely a mass of lifeless words placed one after another? Why was I not only not moved by it but, as I read, was constantly thinking 'At this point I ought to be powerfully affected', 'This passage should be unbearably poignant'? Why, in other words, does this novel seem dead? There are, I think, two reasons, which are closely related. One is the character of the narrator as he presents himself to us. He is, if we may take his word for it, New Haven Semite Viennese. But his mode of expression and thought, his whole way of showing himself to us, prevents us from taking his word for it: he is incurably a nice upper-class Englishman who has been to one of the best schools and one of the best colleges. He has read the best authors and when he comes to express himself he proves to be a very considerable stylist. But the style – and this is the other reason why the novel is dead – is the wrong style. It is highly literary, with a controlled under-pattern of rhetoric. Rhetoric is not necessarily fatal in a novel: Conrad could play his Mighty Wurlitzer like mad and still leave one believing that the purple, the grand pile-up of 64,000-dollar adjectives, was the agonised attempt to express a vision, something seen and deeply felt. It does not seem to me so with Mr Hutchinson. During the trial of Zempelmark, when passions are at their height, the general's wife steps forward, as though to take the burden of guilt. It ought to be a great moment. Instead, Reichenbach-Hutchinson writes, '. . . she merely waited with the stilled face of Niobe for the noise to subside'. Anything, surely, would have been better than the image of Niobe, which has been robbed of meaning by too many generations of hard literary use.

Mr Hutchinson has many virtues, but when I closed his novel I found myself recalling Verlaine's remark to Yeats on *In Memoriam.* Tennyson, he said, was 'too noble, too *Anglais,* and, when he should have been broken-hearted, had many reminiscences'.

Make it new: this is what both Mr Green and Mr Naughton succeed in doing in their very disparate novels. *The Sword of Pleasure* must put its author in the first flight of living historical novelists. It is the story of Sulla, as told by himself; and inevitably, the mind goes back to *I Claudius.* It is the measure of Mr Green's achievement that, without in any way resembling Mr Graves's novel, it is as thoroughly convincing as a re-creation of Roman life and as vivid. Sulla is shown as a character of fascinating complexity, and the analogies between his story and the world of events of today need no emphasis. I have not read an historical novel with more pleasure and, I think, profit for a long time, and much of the pleasure, apart from that derived from the relatively unfamiliar being made new, came from the firmness and suppleness of Mr Green's prose.

Mr Naughton tackles a theme that has been done so often that one would think there could be nothing new left to say about it: an urban working-class childhood in the Twenties. The remarkable thing is that the final effect of *One Small Boy* is one of beauty. Mr Naughton shirks nothing in his delineation of life in a Lancashire slum, but nothing less sordid or squalid could be imagined. This is due partly, I think, to the implied contrast between the slum in which his Irish family lives and the pastoral scenes of County Mayo they come from and remember. But there are other reasons. Mr Naughton has a wonderful ear for speech, and his characters come alive triumphantly in their dialogue. What he catches so well is the sense of family love. He does it completely unsentimentally and without comments; it is there, one feels, as an element in which his characters live. As Catholics, the M'Clouds live in an enclave of their own. What I find especially impressive is that Mr Naughton is as successful with his non-Catholic characters: the little Lancashire boy Herbert, for example, who seems to be never at school because he is running the house during his mother's incessant pregnancies, is a gem of sympathetic observation, a completely rounded character. *One Small Boy* is a novel extraordinarily close to the grain of life.

Best Seller is a satire on recent developments in American publishing, particularly in the paperback industry and the incursions of the public relations people into book-promotion. It is also about the hypocrisy and the corruption involved in the deliberate quest for the sensational and salacious. The hero re-writes a story of Poe's as a paperback, conducts the syndicated column of the publicising parson who is the author of *The Force of Absolute Belief,* and writes the dialogue for a famous playwright. It is done with enormous zest and I found it very funny: there's a splendid description of a fox-hunt in suburban Long Island organised by an Anglophile paperback tycoon. My guess is that when this novel appeared in New York a lot of people suddenly found their faces red and their ears burning.

WALTER ALLEN

Does Not an Arab Bleed?

The Market of Seleukia. By JAMES MORRIS. *Faber. 25s.*

A Reed Shaken by the Wind. By GAVIN MAXWELL. *Longmans. 21s.*

James Morris is a journalist honoured inside his own profession. As a reporter he has few equals now writing in English: his description, for instance, last winter in the *Manchester Guardian* of the organisation of a mountain rescue may well be quoted a century hence as an example of how good journalism could be in the days when people still read newspapers. But he is more than just a journalist. *Sultan in Oman,* published earlier this year, was described in these columns by R. H. S. Crossman as 'a minor masterpiece' – and I don't think Crossman exaggerated. It was more than journalism because it was a thing in itself, observed in its entirety and in depth.

Mr Morris has not pulled it off again. *The Market of Seleukia* is an ambitious and somewhat pretentious attempt to 'do a survey' of the whole Middle East, from Muscat and Aden to Teheran and Aleppo, at an arbitrarily selected moment of time. Now the limiting factor of the journalist is most commonly dimensional, the limit of time or space. The most obvious – and least important – examples are writing to a deadline or to a given length. But there is another obstacle of dimension which the journalist can rarely avoid and almost never overcome: it is the arbitrary definition of subject matter by editorial convenience – these three subjects must be joined together, however inorganically, because that is the only

way they can all be got into the paper, or this matter must be dealt with definitively today, even though the facts are not yet complete, because by tomorrow or next week the news will have rolled on to some other and equally ephemeral high-water mark.

Mr Morris, the brilliance of whose pen ensures him the opportunity to publish between stiff covers and in his own time, can be free from these compulsions. *Sultan in Oman* was a minor masterpiece just because he rejected the dimensional limitations of the journalist and claimed for himself the freedom (and integrity) of literature. This time he has chosen to accept one of the least necessary or purposeful of restrictions by the rather silly gimmick of pretending to survey the whole Middle East as it stood for a notional minute in November 1956, while he held a somewhat improbable conversation with an Israeli colonel in the Sinai desert. But the whole concept of freezing history at a given moment is false. It is a device calculated to meet the exigencies of a particular edition or a particular editorial prejudice, and has little to do with portraying in the round the multi-dimensional flux of men and events.

The point seems to be worth making because *Market of Seleukia* is so much less good than Mr Morris's best. It contains jewels of good writing – the portrait of Colonel Boustead upholding the British Raj at Mukalla, for example, is deep-etched with a diamond pen, and I shall never forget it. Beautifully done, too, are the descriptions of Kando, the cobbler of Bethlehem who deals in more than cobbler's leather, of the author's journey to Aswan, and of Belgravia on the Persian Gulf. This last is a superb example of astringent, yet affectionate, satire. Everywhere, indeed, Mr Morris lets his eye take charge, he lights on a jewel. But too often in this book he is hustling along the treadmill of his own 'survey'. There are far too many clichés and cloudy generalisations – a fair example: 'As Britain left, the political vacuum was filled by the malicious energies of Egypt; and soon the Russians, lumbering on to the scene at last, became a Middle Eastern power for the first time' – far too many questions begged and far too many pieces of shoddy writing.

Contrast Mr Gavin Maxwell. For all the success of *his* earlier books, I doubt if Mr Maxwell is yet in the same street as Mr Morris as a craftsman writer. He certainly undertook the journey he describes in *A Reed Shaken by the Wind* knowing little or nothing of Arabs. But by following the simple rule – which he could have learned from Mr Morris at his best – of recording what he sees and feels, and going on looking and feeling till he is satisfied he has uncovered what matters, he has produced not perhaps a minor masterpiece, but an unusual and exceptionally good travel book. Taking the tiny, almost lost, community of the Marsh Arabs who live north of Basra, he has examined them in such detail and with such wonder and affection that his story assumes a sociological importance he would probably never claim for it.

The problems of the Marsh Arabs may not seem to matter very much in the market of Seleukia, where the deals of *Realpolitik* are made. But what does matter in the Middle East is that we should be helped to understand its inhabitants as human beings and not merely as digits in a political equation. Does not an Arab bleed? And laugh and love and shout and hate? Mr Maxwell's Arabs do, and we know a good deal about how and why. That is a challenge to Mr Morris, which, if he is the champion I think he is, he can well take up.

JOHN FREEMAN

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BBC REITH LECTURES

Russia, the Atom and the West

In the Home Service on Sunday, 10th November, George F Kennan gives the first of his six Reith Lectures on "Russia, the Atom and the West." George F. Kennan was U.S.A. Ambassador to Russia, 1950-52, and is now Professor of History at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, U.S.A. In his lectures he will review some of the major elements of our problem of existing in the same world with the Soviet power.
Among his principal points will be an argument for a general withdrawal of both Anglo-American and Russian forces from Europe, for a more realistic appraisal of the situation in the Middle East, and for a complete cessation of nuclear tests. The importance of Anglo-American relations is underlined.

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The Listener

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Wines and Spirits. By L. W. MARRISON. *Penguin Books.* 5s.

In his Preface Mr L. W. Marrison thanks his wife for overcoming his 'procrastination' in writing this book. It is sad to report that she would have been wiser to tell him to take more time, not less, over writing it. He has accumulated a great deal of valid information about the methods of distillation of spirits and vinification of wines, but he has not taken time enough to digest it and reproduce it in a readable form; the book is that particularly inassimilable amalgam which is made up of slabs of technical information striated by arch facetiousness. Worse still, in the evaluation of wines as they come to the table he makes some wildly inaccurate statements—as, for example, 'there are no bad Médocs', 'champagne is made in every vineyard in the world', and 'Graves is a white wine'. There is in fact a little more red Graves made than white, champagne is made only in Champagne, and there is quite a bit of bad wine, alas, still made in Médoc. Since a Pelican book is likely to have a large sale anyway, it is a pity that more trouble was not taken with this one.

U. P.

Gramophone Records

I THINK that the most intensely enjoyable Bach record that I have heard recently is an excellently engineered Vanguard disc containing the A minor concerto for flute, violin, harpsichord and strings, and the D minor concerto for oboe, violin and strings (the latter being a reconstruction of the Double Harpsichord Concerto in C minor). Both works are performed by the Solisti di Zagreb under Antonio Janigro with extraordinary musicality. The feeling for texture and phrase in, for instance, the supremely lovely slow movement of the A minor concerto is quite remarkable, and throughout both works the unforced rhythmic vitality is most exhilarating. Matched against standards of this sort performances by Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Rudolf Baumgartner and the Lucerne Festival String Orchestra of the A minor, E major and Double D minor violin concerti sound rather earthbound. They are none the less thoroughly sound and decent and enjoy a good Archive recording.

No one issues more Bach than the Archive series. But it seems to have a greater success with keyboard than with vocal music. In the cantatas most of the solo singing is of a standard that no one would dream of tolerating in Mozart or Verdi. The main exception is a coupling of *Christ lag im Todesbanden* and *Tritt auf dem Glaubensbahn* with Helmut Krebs and Fischer-Dieskau, but the rather elderly recording is decidedly poor. Recording, choral singing and orchestral playing are all good in a coupling of *Es erhub sich ein Streit* and *Gott der Herr ist Sonn' und Schild*, but apart from the ever-stylish Krebs, the soloists could hardly be termed enjoyable. The same defect is present on a short ten-inch containing *Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot* and on a little EP recording of *Der Freide sei mit dir*, and here the performances as a whole are a bit plodding to boot. *Wachet! Betet* and *Also hat Gott die Welt Geliebt* are given uneven but passable performances in Oiseau Lyre. Nor do the Motets fare much better. The Thomanerchor sound sadly off form on a poorish Archive recording. The Berlin Motet Choir is far more efficient if rather slick on an indifferent Telefunken recording, but they not only (like the Thomanerchor) use no organ accompaniment but even dispense with the *continuo* in *Lobet den Herrn*. I'm afraid that all these discs are only likely to give lasting pleasure to those who want to have the music at all costs.

In keyboard music, on the other hand, Archive has recently issued some really notable recordings. Two discs of organ preludes and fugues are superbly performed by Helmut Walcha. He combines remarkable clarity and definition with grandeur of conception, but this latter virtue emerges from the unfolding of a great structure and never from sheer bulk of sound. Walcha uses a great range of colour to bring out the character of each piece, so that the little A minor (BWV 551) is as gay as the B minor is majestic; but his registration is always suitable to the musical context. His two-disc recording of *Die Kunst der Fuge* is no less excellent. On a ten-incher Fritz Neumeyer gives exceptionally fine performances of the C minor and D major Toccatas. I found his grasp of architectural structure almost hypnotically compelling. Almost as outstanding are performances by Ralph Kirkpatrick of the English Suites Nos 1 to 4. He uses his harpsichord to secure luminous clarity of texture and his playing is marked by a wonderfully lively rhythmic sense, so that the music really does dance. Only occasionally, as in the Sarabande of the Third Suite does his registration sound over-massive.

Schneiderhan and Kempff have recorded the Beethoven Violin Sonatas. But scrupulous and straightforward though their readings are, Schneiderhan's phrasing and tone is not without a touch of dullness, notably in the slow movements. This is particularly evident when heard against Kreisler and Rupp, whose old records are now being reissued by EMI in a series entitled

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'Great Recordings of the Century' which is well worth the attention of all but hi-fi maniacs. Kreisler's playing on a disc containing the Third and Fourth Sonatas is superb. His interpretation may be a bit romantic for austere taste. But his understanding and grasp of the music is profound, his tone is wonderfully sweet and his phrasing has an extraordinary eloquence. The recording cannot match the sound of the DGG but it wears its years remarkably well.

Both the Hungarian Quartet on Columbia and the Budapest Quartet on Philips have now completed their recordings of Beethoven's quartets. So far as Op. 18 is concerned, I am in no doubt: the vitality, high spirits and precision of the Budapest (who throughout enjoy far superior recording) win hands down. In the three quartets of Op. 59 they are still ahead—but by a narrower margin. The muscularity and dash of their playing is exciting and Beethovenian, whereas in No. 2 the Hungarians lack strength and sound too smooth, although their scherzo is fierce enough. But in, for instance, the slow movement of No. 3 one begins to note a certain lack of inner feeling in the Budapest, while the rather hard tone of the leader becomes obtrusive and monotonous. By the time I reached the late quartets these doubts had hardened into objections. Isolated movements like the scherzo of Op. 135 are brilliantly carried off, but elsewhere their performances sound curiously empty as though they were moving across strange country. The Hungarians lack the Budapest's vitality of line and rhythm, but they often sound more meaningful in this music and at times they touch a hushed vein of poetry. The trouble is that they lack incisiveness and tension and thus often fail to sustain what opens well. Nonetheless in a coupling of Op. 127 and 135 I just prefer them. But EMI may reissue some of the pre-war Busch recordings and neither of these new sets can touch their performances of the late quartets.

Finally, very brief notes on some recordings of Beethoven's orchestral music. HMV have issued in their 'Great Recordings' series performances of the first three concertos by Schnabel. In the C minor he is clearly in far from top form while the recording is atrocious, and this is doubtless why it has not previously been available. Yet it is to my mind well worth hearing for the unique stylistic insight that Schnabel offers into this music. RCA has issued a brilliant if somewhat harsh recording of a performance of the Eroica by Reiner and the Chicago SO, which although lacking the full majesty of Klemperer is in its way exceedingly fine. Klemperer's Fifth is available on a ten-inch Columbia. It is a measured, apollonian performance eschewing all superficial excitement, but its proportions are immense. Vox offers exceptional value in the form of a *one*-disc recording of the Choral Symphony, performed by Horenstein with remarkable force and authority. The final movement is particularly successful, and although the recording is not of top class the balance is excellent. The same is true of recordings of good performances by Horenstein of the Fifth and the Jupiter which Vox has fitted on to a single disc—again unusually good value.

PETER HEYWORTH

Week-end Competition

No. 1445 **Set by Bystander**

Competitors are asked to submit a verse (10 lines or less) in which all the following words occur: by-law, by-pass, by-play, by-word. Entries by 21 November.

Result of No. 1442 **Set by Arthur Marshall**

These Foolish Things, in the song by Eric Maschwitz and Jack Strachey, 'remind me of you'. The 'Things' were largely *de luxe* articles, *e.g.*, gardenias, the *Ile de France*, wild strawberries, long excited cables, etc. Competitors are invited to write, either in the same or a new form, a chorus or choruses featuring altogether more humdrum and less attractive articles.

Report

Competitors were numerous and they lashed merrily out in a wide range of things they considered suitable—beans in tomato, Mrs Dale, cabbage, Wapping, the telly, dentures, custard, socks, tea-bags, and Elvis Presley, who (don't ask me why) was mentioned no fewer than fourteen times. The 8-line limit, imposed by a prudent editor, made a full chorus impossible, but even then only five competitors could keep up the delightful pace through 8 lines. Of these, Guy Hadley's admirable entry was just edged out by the splendid sourness of the first three printed (who share the prizes). There follow couplets from the other finalists.

The Old-Tyme dancing in the Baths at Norbury,
The way you always liked your milk-shakes—strawberry,
Those *ghastly* hoop ear-rings,
These foolish things remind me of you.
The silver parting in your henna tresses,
That O.S. hulk in little-girlish dresses,
A back-stall's broken springs,
These foolish things remind me of you.

H. C. BARTON

A grubby T-shirt, lettered 'I love Elvis',
Split jeans—and just a glimpse of tide-marked pelvis,
The plimsolls laced with strings—these ghoulish things
Resigned me to you . . .
But now a dog-end floats alone—monastic
In puddled froth on our Espresso plastic,
And when the juke-box sings
'These Foolish Things' I find me the loo . . .

DAVID CLIMIE

A thin Brown Windsor sown with soft, sad croûtons,
Filet d'agneau? Revenons à tes moutons!
The songs my stomach sings,
These foolish things remind me of you.
A whiff of sauerkraut in Earls Court Station,
Risottos left to burn; an eructation,
Oh, how your Vol Au Vent clings . . .
These foolish things remind me of you.

DAVID YATES MASON

The sav'ry remnant of an odd suspender,
The old press cuttings when you changed your gender.

J. F. MARSHALL

The way you tried to do a Steeleman skiffle,
The way you talked your Françoise Sagan piffle.

E. TINDALL

A plastic sausage in a transport diner,
Those awful curtains by a mad designer.

ROSS MACMANUS

Your 'Surely, not again!' whenever I go
The Gentian Violet on your impetigo.

S. H. IBALL

The page of *Worker* you wrapped fish and chips in,
The corset which you used to crush your hips in.

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The hound of heaven is difficult to accept and impossible to ignore. Even the City, which prides itself on its ability to translate everything from a strike to an earthquake into prices, is hopelessly bemused: there is no recent precedent for the appearance of a new constellation. Prices have been left to take care of themselves while the City goes dog-gazing, and if they slip a little, who cares? On Wall Street it has been much the same. Stock markets have been distracted from distraction by distraction, and prices have stopped falling.

The atmosphere, however, seems to be lighter. Investors, much like the rest of us, seem ready to change their mood of sullen resignation for one of excited expectancy. When the markets come back to life, prices are likely to rise. Everyone warms to the prospect of a race, and crash programmes are in the air. Even if the cost of fireworks is to be reckoned in scientists rather than production, the American economy may get back some sense of direction; closer Nato co-operation will have economic side-effects, and it will take a good many dollars to convince the floating voter of the West's technical superiority. K. claims that sputnik competitions are better than bomb competitions. It is certainly more fun setting off fireworks than digging holes in the ground.

* * *

The gold reserve is convalescent. Last month $250m was borrowed from the Ex-Im Bank and $133m had to be paid over to the European Payments Union to settle the September account: anything more than $117m would be a genuine improvement in the reserve. It rose by $243m, and this increase – plus the £9m surplus earned with the EPU – may seem a good performance for a time of year when sterling is usually weak. But the rise in the reserve must have been due almost entirely to a partial reversal of the speculative movements which hit it so badly in the two previous months – and only a quarter of the gold lost in those two months has so far been recovered. The EPU surplus, when account is taken of the sharp worsening in the German and Swiss positions, is rather disappointing. Perhaps France and Holland are doing better – it is certainly worth noticing that the franc has hardened considerably since it became obvious that M. Gaillard would succeed in his government-making – and other sterling countries may be spending heavily. But it is clear that even Blood-and-Iron has not pulled it off yet.

* * *

The weakness of sterling, the government's only excuse for its masochistic policies, is really rather puzzling. There is no evidence that British costs are particularly high or that the constantly disappointing performance of British exporters is due to the size of their wage bill. If wages went on rising faster than output there might be trouble eventually, but wages have been rising less rapidly this year than last, and other countries are much more badly placed in this respect than we are. It is true that we devalued once before and that people who go in for international banking should expect trouble. But this is hardly enough to explain why the little men in Zurich should have such little confidence in Britain's economic future or why they should always be ready to sell their sterling at a moment's notice.

One is tempted to wonder whether the little men in Zurich really have much to do with it at all. Freezing wages may not be a matter of vital economic importance but it is a matter of vital political concern to Mr Thorneycroft. The people most likely to regard wage increases as economic disaster and to throw up sterling are disillusioned government supporters – and the boom in dollar securities earlier this year showed how much their disillusion can cost the gold reserve. It is the City, to a large extent, which decides whether sterling should be strong or weak. One banker mutters gloomily over lunch to a Swiss colleague; a harmless sale of sterling is interpreted as another sign of foreign uneasiness, is reported as such and breeds another. Above all, there are a very large number of British firms – traders, bankers and international companies – who are able to switch out of sterling whenever they feel that the government is letting the country go to the dogs. The behaviour of sterling and the course of government economic policy will inevitably be coloured by whatever theories the financial community chooses to hold – unless the government enforces a better theory of its own.

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The Chess Board

No. 417. The Blessing of Correspondence

For those who can spare the time, there is nothing like correspondence chess to improve their strength and to test variations. As for my suggestion to test the interesting Lopez line (3) . . . P-QR3; (4) B-R4, P-QKt4; (5) B-Kt3, Kt-R4; (6) B x P ch, I have had some interesting comments, and I understand that one or two correspondence games are in progress. I hope there will be a good many more, and I shall be glad to see them. Meanwhile, Dr P. C. Wason sent me an interesting correspondence game he won against a young competitor in the championship of Israel.

(1) P-K4, P-K3; (2) P-Q4, P-Q4; (3) Kt-QB3, Kt-KB3; (4) B-Kt5, B-K2; (5) P-K5, KKt-Q2; (6) P-KR4, P-QB4; (7) Kt-Kt5, P-B3.

I should have liked them to test my favourite variation (7) . . . O-O which gives Black a strong attack for the exchange.

(8) B-Q3 P-QR3; (9) Q-R5 ch K-B1; (10) R-R3, P x Kt; (11) B-R6, Q-R4 ch; (12) B-Q2, Q-B2; (13) R-Kt3, Kt x P; (14) R x P, R x P! (K x R?); (15) K-B1!, P-R3; (16) B x RP, R x B; (17) Q x R, K-K1; (18) B x P ch, QKt-B3; (19) Q-R7 Q-Q3; (20) Kt-K2, B-B1; (21) Q-Kt8, B-Q2; (22) B x Kt, Kt x B; (23) P-R5, Kt-Q1; (24) K-Kt1!

To prevent . . Q-R7, P-K4; (25) P-R6, B-K3; (26) P-R7, B x Q; (27) P x B(Q) R-B1; (28) Kt x P, resigns. Obviously . . . P x Kt would be countered by (29) R-K1 ch, etc.

Another well deserved book-token for this 'Readers' Own' week will go to J. D. Taylor who, in a correspondence game against a Yugoslav player, reached this position. /2kr4/1p1kt1pb1/1q2p2kt3pPpKtQ/p1pP4/P1P5/1P1Kt2PP/R1B4K/. Taylor was Black and thinks he might have tried . . . R-KR1, but what he did play was interesting enough. (1) . . . Kt x KP; (2) P x Kt, Kt-KKt5; (3) Kt-KR3, R-KR1; (4) Q x KBP, B x KP; (5) Kt-KB3, R x Kt (6) P x R, Q-B7; the choice for White now being either to give a perpetual himself or to force Black to do so after (7) P x Kt, Q x Kt ch; (8) K-Kt1, B x P ch; (9) K x B, Q-B7 ch, etc.

My third chessbook token goes to J. H. Rule who, having not yet graduated beyond our weekly 4-pointer for beginners, claims beginner's luck in a (somewhat unorthodox) game he played against a fellow-tyro. Playing White he soon reached this position. /r1bqk2r/ppp1p2p/2kt2p1b/3p4/2BPP1QKt/8/PPP2PPP/RKt2K2R/. After Q-R5 ch, K-Q2 he proudly announced a mate in 4; and since 'beginners' luck' should be encouraged, this might as well serve as **A** of this week's competition, no doubt the easiest ever of our 4-pointers for beginners.

B is a draw and should be easy enough for 6 ladder-points. **C** (for 7) is not so easy, but quite a beauty and almost a classic. It's a draw too. Usual prizes. Entries by 18 November.

B: W. V. Holzhausen
1910

C: Leonid Kubbel
1909

REPORT on No. 414. Set 19 October.

A: (1) R-Q8!, P-B3; (2) Q-B7 ch, R-Kt2; (3) B x P! etc.
B: (5) K-Kt1!, Q any; (6) K (or P) x Q, P-Kt4; (7) P x P e.p. etc.
C: (1) P-Kt3!, R-KKt1 (forced); (2) R-QKt4! P-Kt5 (forced); (3) R-K1, R-Kt4 ch; (4) K x P, R-Kt3 ch; (5) K-B7, P-Q7! (R-R3?); (6) P-R4, P – Q; (7) R x Q, R-B3 ch!; (8) K-Kt7! R-B4; (9) R-QKt1, K-Kt4; (10) R-Kt6! R-K4; (11) R-Kt5, etc.

Many correct solutions. Prizes: G. Abrahams, C. Allen, A. E. Harris, R. Hayward, J. Mitchell, C. Sandberg.

ASSIAC

PERSONAL

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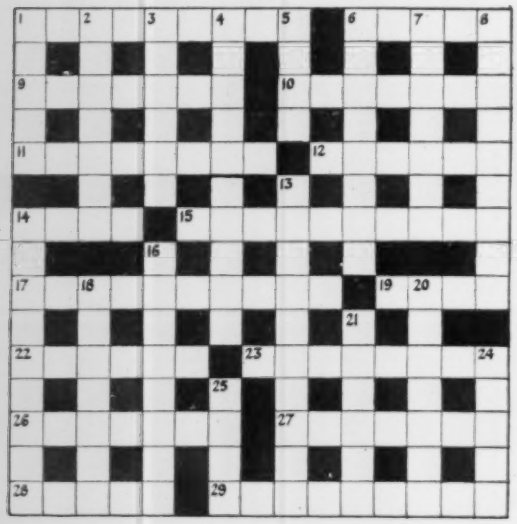
AIR FRANCE

Week-end Crossword 276

Prizes: Three book tokens of 15s. for the first correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 276, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London, WC1, by first post on 19 Nov.



ACROSS

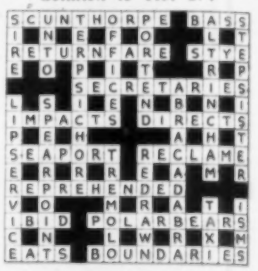
1. Horse with a rider on? (9).
6. Kind of English graduate without error (5).
9. Presented for a penny fee perhaps (7).
10. The colouring shows that mother has signs of an operation internally (7).
11. It is useful for pressing a tart embracing the inexperienced (8).
12. Kind of country in which the fields are left undrained (6).
14. The girl returns to have a meal (4).
15. Disown: at heart it is a matter of misbehaviour with a woman (10).
17. An old relic perhaps gets round a single female (10).
19. If let this mark would turn red (4).
22. Star putting tennis authority in the sky (6).
23. Agents for genuine mountains (8).
26. Apollyon is a wicked fellow (7).
27. 'I will speak —— to her, but use none' (*Hamlet*) (7).
28. Festival without a second consumer (5).
29. The boy holds a periodic payment for paternity (9).

DOWN

1. Demonstration, but it needs correcting (5).
2. Abstain from music (7).
3. Drug not quite sufficient for Florence Nightingale, for example (6).
4. This paper said it more peculiarly (5, 5).
5. District without any ego? (4).
6. Begged to be a drunkard interrupted by an expression of disgust (8).
7. Defame the one who comes down after a second (7).
8. The eccentric makes the domestic react differently (9).
13. Make a change in the centre-foward—he is the chief culprit (10).
14. Though it is uneven, I fight in the engagement (9).
16. Confuse the crazy in liquor (8).
18. Survive others, but finally dismissed? (7).
20. Disease caught on holiday time (7).
21. Iris on the bottle (6).
24. Girl who may have issue (5).
25. Cut legs up (4).

SET-SQUARE

Solution to No. 274



PRIZEWINNERS TO No. 274

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are required by ONTARIO DEPARTMENT OF REFORM INSTITUTIONS to work with Juveniles or Adults in reformatories. Civil service benefits include cumulative sick leave, annual paid holiday, 5-day week, superannuation, annual increments. Salary range from $3,600 to $4,900 per annum.

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Apply for application forms and further details to

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Ontario Immigration Department,
12 New Burlington Street,
London, W.1.

EXPERIMENTAL Officers and Assistant Experimental Officers in various Government Departments. The Civil Service Commissioners invite applications for pensionable posts. The posts are divided between following main groups and subjects: (a) Mathematical and Physical Sciences, (b) Chemistry and Metallurgy, (c) Biological Sciences, (d) Engineering subjects and (e) Miscellaneous (including e.g. Geology, Library and Technical Information Services). Age Limits: For Experimental Officers, at least 26 and under 31 on 31 December, 1957; for Assistant Experimental Officers at least 18 and under 28 on December 31, 1957. Extension for regular service in H.M. Forces. Candidates aged 31 or over with specialised experience for Experimental Officer posts may be admitted. Candidates must have at least one of a number of specified qualifications. Examples are Higher School Certificate, General Certificate of Education, Scottish Leaving Certificate, Scottish Universities Preliminary Examination, Northern Ireland Senior Certificate (all in appropriate subjects and at appropriate levels), Higher National Certificate, University degree. Candidates taking their examinations in 1957 may be admitted provisionally. Candidates without such qualifications may be admitted exceptionally on evidence of suitable experience. In general, a higher standard of qualification will be looked for in the older candidates than in the younger ones. Salary (London):—Experimental Officer. Minimum £970 (women £894); Men's scale maximum £1,190. Assistant Experimental Officer. Starting pay £385 (at 18) up to £685 (women £661) at 26. Men's scale maximum £850. Women's scales are being raised to reach equality with men's by 1961. Somewhat lower outside London. Promotion prospects. Opportunities for further education. Further particulars from Civil Service Commission, Scientific Branch, 30 Old Burlington Street, London, W.1, quoting No. S94-95/57. Interview Boards arranged at intervals, as required. Early application is advised.

BBC requires News Assistant in Cardiff. Duties include preparation and broadcasting of objective and accurate reports and collecting and editing news for use in news bulletins and programmes, both in Sound and Television. Thorough knowledge of Wales and Welsh language essential. Proved journalistic experience, including good sub-editorial training, and good microphone voice desirable. Salary £1,060 (possibly higher if qualifications exceptional) rising by five annual increments to £1,365 p.a. max. Requests for application forms (enclosing addressed envelope and quoting reference G.409, N.Stm.) should reach Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W.1, within five days.

MAYFLOWER Grammar School, Ikenne, Nigeria. Wanted Male science graduate, married or single teach chem. and biol., from Jan. 1958. Sal. £600×£25. Free passage, free accom. Mayflower is non-sectarian, independent. Opportunity abundant for adventure and initiative. Apply Principal, Mayflower, Ikenne, Via Shagamu, Nigeria.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT—continued

HAUSA, Swahili, Somali—BBC requires: (a) African Programme Organiser (British subject) responsible under general direction of Head of African, Caribbean and Colonial Services for planning and supervision of programmes in English (about six hours weekly) and African languages, Hausa, Swahili and Somali (about ten hours weekly), broadcast to Africa. Essential qualifications: first-hand knowledge of present-day conditions in Africa, experience in handling African staff and broadcasting and planning of programmes. Knowledge of one of the African languages and experience in a broadcasting service in Africa highly desirable. Salary £1,205 (possibly higher if qualifications exceptional), rising by five annual increments to £1,535 p.a. max. (b) Part-time Language Supervisors (British subjects) for Hausa, Swahili and Somali. Duties include checking accuracy, terminology and style of translations of news bulletins and talks, following broadcasts in studio and maintenance of language standards. First-class knowledge of one or more of the languages essential with some knowledge of the people and countries. Previous residence in the countries concerned an advantage. Salary pro rata based on £1,060 p.a. (full-time rate)—possibly higher if qualifications exceptional. (c) Programme Assistants for preparation and broadcasting of programmes in Hausa, Swahili and Somali. Candidates must be able to speak and (where appropriate) write the offered languages as a mother tongue at high standard. They must have good understanding of English and be able to speak it fluently and be able among other duties to prepare scripts, translate English scripts, read acceptably and fluently in their own language at the microphone, develop contacts with possible Hausa, Swahili or Somali contributors in Britain. Previous broadcasting experience an advantage. Selected candidates will be required to take voice and translation tests. Appointment for three years in first instance, salary £925 p.a. with prospects of promotion. Qualified applicants interested in part-time or contributory work may also apply stating part-time availability. Requests for application forms (enclosing addressed envelope and quoting reference G.413, N. Stm.) should state post applied for and reach Appointments Officer, Broadcasting House, London, W1, within five days.

TRAVEL Agency, specialising in the unusual approach to Continental holidays, offers interesting careers in travel. Good education with some languages. Keenness, initiative and sense of responsibility. Excellent working conditions, free foreign holidays, superannuation scheme. Applications with age, education and experience, to Box 6143.

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TRAVEL Agency, West End, requires good shorthand-typist/secretary to start December. Hours 9.30-5.30 and about every other Saturday 9.30-12.30. Three weeks holiday and some travel facilities. French or Spanish advantageous but not essential. Applicants should be 24-35, adaptable and willing to work hard. Starting salary £10 10s. Write giving details of previous experience to Box 6238.

ASSISTANT Housemothers, resident, required for interesting work in Children's Homes, with boys and girls aged 5-15 years. Training or experience desirable but not essential. Separate bedrooms and good holidays. Minimum salary £30 16s. 8d. per month, less valuation of emoluments. Apply Children's Officer, County Hall, Chelmsford.

ADMINISTRATIVE County of Wilts. Applications invited from women holding the Home Office Certificate in Child Care and/or a Social Science Diploma for post of Child Care Officer, salary within A.P.T. I scale (£575×£30 to £725). Application forms with full details from Clerk of the Council, County Hall, Trowbridge. Returnable by November 19, 1957.

MARRIED couple required at Langley House Reception Home, East India Dock Road, E.14. Duties include observation and assessment. Salaries: housefather £505 to £577 10s. Housemother £437 10s. to £512 10s. each plus £18 10s. p.a. for Home Office Certificate less charge for board, etc. Apply to Children's Officer (CH/NEDO/1979), L.C.C., County Hall, S.E.1.

YOUTH Club Leader, full-time. Qualified and experienced woman required for a mixed club with junior section West London. Accommodation available. Pension scheme. Reply to Organising Sec., Feathers Clubs Association, 29 Mulready St., N.W.8.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT—continued

CITY of Manchester Health Department require Municipal Midwives. Houses and flats available; car and uniform allowances, laundry paid in full. Salary in accordance with Nurses and Midwives Council recommendation. Application forms, obtainable from the Medical Officer of Health, Nursing Services Division, Town Hall, Manchester, 2.

THE Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, Hackney Road, E.2, Shadwell, E.1, and Banstead Wood, Surrey. Almoner (full or part time) required at Shadwell, E.1, branch. Whitley terms and conditions. Apply with particulars of training and experience to Group Secretary at Hackney Road, from whom information regarding the post may be obtained.

HAMPSTEAD. The Town & Country School, 38 Eton Av., N.W.3, Teacher(s), exper. in creative work with senior children (Art, crafts, acting, class music, writing) reqd. now or Jan. Burnham scale. Gov. superann.

WANTED for January, housemistress interested in town and country pursuits. Some previous work with children essentl. Teaching or matron exp. an asset. Box 6141.

THOROUGHLY experienced Kindergarten Mistress (Froebel) wanted now or Jan. Town & Country School, 38 Eton Av., N.W.3.

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QUAKER International Work Camps Office need shorthand-typist; pref. experienced and capable of acting as deputy during Secy's absence. Apply Friends Service Council, Friends House, Euston Rd., N.W.1.

EDITORIAL secretary for weekly educational journal. Good shorthand-typing, literacy, initiative, common-sense. Successful candidate must be prepared tackle job of work on the secretarial side, but would also have opportunity learn proof-reading, occasional subbing, etc. according to interest/ability. Salary £500 p.a. Pension scheme. Write fully Box 6251.

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